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THE RANCH ERA

THE SUTTER PERIOD, 1841-1845

The official contract for the sale of Fort Ross assets to Johann (John) Augustus Sutter was agreed upon at Bodega Bay in September 1841 and was signed in San Francisco on December 13th of that year. The contract stipulated that Sutter pay the Russian-American Company the equivalent of \$30,000, in installments of both produce and cash. After the signing, as Sutter put it, "Champagne flowed freely; we drank the health of the Russian Emperor, and I was toasted as the new owner of Ross and Bodega."

Why John Sutter contracted to buy Ross is not fully clear, even in the hindsight of history. But the "frank, prepossessing" entrepreneur was delighted when the Russians offered him the opportunity. Sutter, whose name would become synonymous with the discovery of gold in California and its pre-territorial political and military events, had established a ranch near the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers in mid-July 1839, intent on becoming, as he told the Mexican Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado, "an *empresario* on the northern California frontier by settling colonists on the Sacramento." But progress had been slow, and the chance to add equipment and stock to his holdings in one transaction may have been too appealing for the dynamic Sutter to ignore. He was not one to shy away from opportunity.

Born of Swiss-German parents in Kandern, Grand Duchy of Baden (Germany), in 1803, Sutter grew up in Switzerland, working first as an apprentice in printing, publishing, and bookselling. Later he worked as a grocery clerk, and finally ran a dry goods and drapery shop. The workaday routine of these occupations he combined with service as a First Under-Lieutenant in the Swiss volunteer military reserve. In 1826, he married Annette Dübeld, daughter of an old and prominent family in Burgdorf, Switzerland, where the newlyweds settled and their five children were born. For all of his endeavors, Sutter incurred more debt than success, and in 1834 he sailed alone for the United States to seek his fortune. It would be nearly twenty years before his wife and surviving children joined him.

In the United States, Sutter set out from New York for Ohio, and then Missouri, which had become the jumping off place for those drawn to the opportunities in the opening West. From Missouri, Sutter made several trips to New Mexico, trying his hand at the Santa Fe trade but with meager results. In 1838, he traveled with a fur trading party across the Rockies on the Oregon Trail to the British outpost at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River. He hoped to go on to California, but no boats were bound there, and he was warned that winter travel over the Siskiyou Mountains to the south was too dangerous. So he sailed on a Hudson's Bay Company ship to Hawaii, hoping to get passage from there to California. Again, no ships were set to sail for California directly, but he was able to get a berth as an unpaid supercargo aboard a chartered merchant vessel sailing for Sitka, Alaska. During his short stay in Sitka, Sutter was entertained by Russian officials at the headquarters of the Russian-American Company, and from them he learned more about California to pique his interest. His persistence was at last rewarded, and he resumed his voyaging, arriving at Yerba Buena (San Francisco) after a rough trip on 1 July 1839.

Once in California, Sutter immediately went down the coast to Monterey to present his plan of settlement and his credentials to Governor Alvarado. With the way now clear for him to settle in California's great central valley, Sutter returned north, first paying the customary courtesy calls on two influential men who were soon to be his neighbors, General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo at Sonoma, near the north end of San Francisco Bay, and Alexander G. Rotchev, the Russian manager at Fort Ross. Then he chartered a trio of small vessels and sailed up the Sacramento and American Rivers, choosing a site near today's downtown Sacramento, known to visitors then and now as Sutter's Fort. Sutter became a citizen of Mexico in 1840 and received a land grant of over 45,000 acres from Governor Alvarado in 1841, naming it New Helvetia (New Switzerland).

When the 38-year-old Swiss agreed to purchase the assets of the Russian-American Company at Ross (which did not include the land), his first act was to begin transferring all movable items to New Helvetia. In the fall of 1841, Sutter placed Robert Livermore in charge of driving about 2,000 of the approximate 3,500 head of formerly Russian-owned stock to Sutter's Hock Farm near present-day Marysville. Then, in late October, he appointed Robert T. Ridley his first manager at Fort Ross, giving him the task of removing most of the remainder of the stock, equipment, supplies, some buildings, and small boats to New Helvetia via a schooner he had obtained from the Russians, which he renamed the *Sacramento*.

Ridley, an English Cockney, was described by one historian as having "a limitless capacity for liquor" and being one of "the most facile, artistic, and bare-faced liars in the Californias. But Sutter liked him. Beside, he played a good game of whist." Ridley served as manager until the spring of 1842, about which time Sutter encountered him at the annual strawberry festival in Yerba Buena indulging his fondness for drink and celebration. This encounter, and Sutter's subsequent replacement of him with twenty-two-year-old John Bidwell, may not have been a coincidence.

Born in 1819 in Chautauqua County, New York, the young Bidwell had moved with his family to Ohio in 1834. At seventeen, he had hiked 300 miles to enroll in the Kingsville Academy, and by the next year, owing to his remarkable progress, he was made its principal. After a stint of teaching, which he found "monstrously tedious," he decided on a trip to the frontier. In May 1841, he joined the John Bartleson party, the first emigrant wagon train leaving Missouri for the far west. The trip was rough and dangerous, and after great hardship, including the loss of their wagons, members of the party finally reached their California destination in early November. Several of the men, Bidwell among them, soon found their way to Sutter's Fort. Sutter quickly recognized the ability of the tall, imposing Bidwell and offered him a job as clerk, marking the beginning of a lifelong friendship between the expansive but erratic Swiss and the retiring but astute young Easterner.

Bidwell remained as manager at Fort Ross for fourteen months, during which time he completed the moving task, presiding over the removal of "... lumber, iron, and other equipment. Even large circular threshing floors in which the Russians tramped out their wheat with bands of wild horses were torn to pieces and removed." Catching the wild livestock for the trip to New Helvetia became a challenge. Mexican vaqueros were hired to lasso them, but in ten day's time "... they lassoed nine grizzly bears, one black bear, many elk, antelope and deer—but they only caught five of the wild horses."

After Bidwell left Fort Ross, he returned to work for his employer at Sutter's Fort and at the Hock Farm. In 1846, he joined in the Bear Flag Revolt, the initial move to free California from Mexico, as a major in Lieutenant Colonel John Charles Frémont's California Battalion, and he wrote a declaration of independence for the Bear Flag Republic. He then struck out on his own, ultimately leaving his own stamp on California history. In 1848, he discovered gold on the Feather River, and soon thereafter began to develop the renowned 28,000-acre Rancho del Arroyo Chico that had been granted him under Mexican rule, and founded the town of Chico. In the ferment that characterized early California, Bidwell found a ready response in various political circles to his principles and farsighted ideas, and as a result he held a number of state offices, was elected to the U.S. Congress, ran for Governor of California, and was a nominee for the Presidency on the Prohibition Party ticket. In 1863, as Civil War reached across the country, Governor Leland Stanford named him Brigadier General in the California militia. At the age of forty eight, Bidwell fell in love with Annie Elliot Kennedy, the daughter of the Superintendent of the U.S. Census in Washington, D.C., and in 1868 they were married. They made their home in a handsome mansion at Rancho del Arroyo Chico, devoting their energies to social reform and educational causes, and garnering the respect of all who knew them. The mansion survives today as a state historical park.

Several others followed Bidwell as manager at Fort Ross, including Samuel Smith and the last Sutter manager, William Otto Benitz, who was named to the post in the fall of 1843.

Benitz, like Sutter, was born in the Grand Duchy of Baden (Germany). In 1832, at seventeen, Benitz left his birthplace of Endingen for the United States, shipping as an ordinary seaman on a merchant vessel. His ship was wrecked off the coast of Mexico, and he was one of only a few survivors. He stayed in Mexico until 1841, when he started his journey to Upper California, ultimately taking on work at Sutter's Hock Farm. Benitz served as manager at Fort Ross for nearly a year and a half. During Benitz's tenure as manager, the question of the title to the Fort Ross lands was settled when the Mexican authorities took action to officially reject Sutter's claim to the ownership of the former Russian landholdings. They divided the land into two grants: the Bodega Rancho (August 1844), consisting of 35,487 acres between Bodega Bay and the Russian River, which was granted to Captain Stephen Smith, and the Muñiz Rancho (December 1845), totaling about 17,760 acres of land between the Russian River and Timber Cove, which was awarded to Manuel Torres.

Manuel Torres, who never lived on his Muñiz Rancho, was born into an aristocratic family in the northern Peruvian city of Piura about 1826. He arrived in California at the age of seventeen on the ship carrying Captain Smith and the Captain's bride, Manuela Torres, Manuel's 15-year-old sister. In 1848, Torres married Mariana Richardson, the daughter of William Antonio Richardson of Sausalito, and together they had six children. Torres served in the California Assembly as a representative from Marin County, and later farmed in the Bodega area and owned a tavern in San Francisco. He died in Alameda, California, in 1910 at the age of eighty four.

Eight months before Torres received his Muñiz grant, Benitz had signed an agreement with Sutter to lease the Fort Ross property and operate it as a ranch with his partner, Ernest Rufus. Rufus, another German immigrant, from Wurtemberg, came to the United States in 1836 at the age of twenty six, eventually making his way to California and Sutter's New Helvetia in 1842 with a party of trappers. During his stay, he served as a lieutenant in the Mexican Army, under Governor Manuel Micheltorena, commanding the Nueva Helvetia company of some one hundred Indian soldiers. He also participated in the Bear Flag Revolt in 1846 as a major of militia. Benitz and Rufus ranched on the Muñiz grant until 1849, presumably under an arrangement with Manuel Torres. The partnership also acquired land up the coast from Fort Ross—the German Rancho, which was granted to Rufus in 1846. In 1849, Rufus left the partnership and moved to Sonoma where he resided the remainder of his life, except for short forays to Southern California and Europe. He died in Sonoma in 1887.

With the loss of any claim to the Fort Ross property in 1845, Sutter's association with the former Russian settlement ended, but not his role in the history of California. His influence was widespread—he was involved in the Bear Flag Revolt, he participated in the great gold discovery of 1848, and was a member of the state constitutional convention. Generous and hospitable, he could also be truculent and obstinate, traits that contributed to the loss of his extensive holdings after the Gold Rush. Disillusioned, Sutter left California for the East in 1865. Here, he spent the rest of his life trying to persuade the U.S. Government to restore his title to the lands awarded him by Mexico and later overrun by squatters after California was ceded to the United States following the Mexican-American War. After years of fruitless effort, he died in Washington, D.C. in 1880.

THE BENITZ PERIOD, 1845-1867

After Rufus moved to Sonoma, Benitz took on a new partner, Charles Theodor Meyer, and they jointly made an official agreement with Manuel Torres in 1851 to purchase the Muñiz Rancho for \$5,000 (although the land was not deeded to Benitz until 1857, and the land patent was not granted to Torres by the U.S. Government until 1860).

Benitz moved his young wife into the quarters of the last Russian manager and established it as the family residence. The new owner of Ross had married eighteen-year-old Josephine Kohlmer (Kolmer) in 1846. Her family, who were also from Emdingen, had emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1831. In 1845, they joined the John Grigsby/William Brown Ide wagon train bound for California, and went on to the Fort Ross area late that year. Ten children were born to William and Josephine at Ross, with seven surviving to adulthood. As the family grew, Benitz expanded the Rotchev House to meet their needs, including the building of a two-story addition. Here the family collected an extensive library, installed a reed organ, and hired a private tutor to educate the children in the German, Spanish, and English languages, among other subjects.

Little is known about Benitz's partner, Charles Meyer. He may have been the "C. Meyer" entered on a passenger list of a ship that arrived in San Francisco from New York in 1849. But whatever his origin, it is known that he had an interest in other property along the Sonoma coast during and after his partnership with Benitz. There is also some indication that he married a Kashaya Pomo Indian woman.

In 1848, one hundred and sixty-two Kashaya Pomo Indians still lived outside the Fort, including sixty-three men, fifty-two women, and forty-seven children. Some of them worked for Benitz and Meyer and received board and lodging and were paid \$8 a month, a wage decreed by the Government. The work included ploughing, harrowing, planting, harvesting, herding, helping in the kitchen, milking the cows, and taming the horses. In turn, the Indians looked to Benitz for protection from marauding ranchers who were in the habit of raiding Indian villages for slaves. Following a raid on Fort Ross in August 1845, Benitz complained to the local authorities. An inquiry was held in which the leaders of the raid were publicly identified, and from that time on no further known attempts were made to run off any Indians from Fort Ross.

In addition to the Indians, Benitz and Meyer hired others, particularly for jobs such as hunting, surveying, carpentering, and blacksmithing. These non-Indian workers received variously between \$35 and \$60 per month for their labor.

The two partners undertook a number of successful commercial farming enterprises. Starting with a few remaining head of the Russian livestock and adding stock of their own, they increased the herds until they numbered over one thousand head of cattle, one thousand sheep, one hundred and fifty horses, and a large number of swine. In 1852, Benitz wrote that they had sold 400,000 pounds of potatoes for 5¢ a pound, and by 1856 there were seventy acres of oats, thirty of barley, and twenty of peas and other vegetables under cultivation. The trees in the Russian orchard bore apples and other fruit, and shortly after 1858 Benitz planted another apple orchard of nearly seventeen hundred trees. Even without the New Orchard, as it came to be called, Benitz sold 20,000 pounds of apples in 1856 at 12¢ a pound.

About a mile up the coast from Ross, at Timber Cove, tenants of Benitz built a sawmill and a chute for loading and unloading cargo on the schooners that called at the cove. These vessels traded up and down the coast and rivers, supplying lumber, piling, potatoes, grain, building stones, deer hides, eggs, butter, apples, live ducks and pigeons, and other items to be sold in Sonoma, Sacramento, and San Francisco. In 1856, Benitz declared that he intended to build a 12-mile road across his "camp", and in 1857 he was authorized to operate a ferryboat across the Russian River, near today's bridge by the town of Jenner, as another step in opening up travel along the coast by means other than by sea. He also made arrangements with a group of Italian fishermen from San Francisco to establish a fishery at Fort Ross, which provided another avenue of direct communication with the Bay Area on a weekly basis. Moreover, Benitz paid \$50 a year to Captain Smith, who lived at the site of the old Khlebnikov Rancho near Bodega, to make the

18-hour journey to Sonoma to pick up the mail, and sent a man on the 24-mile trip from Ross to Smith's ranch once a week to collect the mail from Smith.

In a further move to reduce the isolation of Fort Ross, Benitz paid \$50 a year to Captain Smith, who lived near Bodega, 24 miles away from Ross, to pick up the mail from Sonoma, an 18-hour trip from Fort Ross. Benitz sent a man to Bodega once a week to get the mail from Smith.

By 1855, Benitz had made enough money to buy out Meyer for \$22,500. Early in their partnership there were good profits to be made from their enterprises, particularly during the Gold Rush, but now lower farm prices and the scarcity of labor drastically cut profits. So, in 1859, Benitz began to lease rights to his lands, allowing various individuals to log and mill timber, mine coal and minerals, and prospect for petroleum. However, he realized little money from these leases, and because he felt he and his family were being discriminated against because they were German, Benitz started selling portions of his land. By 1867, he had sold all of his Fort Ross holdings and had moved his family to Oakland, California. In 1874, the family emigrated to Argentina where they established a successful ranching business, at their *estancia*, La California, which members of the Benitz family continue to operate today. William died there in 1876. Josephina made one return visit to California in 1899 and continued to correspond with the new owners at Ross for a number of years.

THE DIXON/FAIRFAX PERIOD, 1867-1873

When Benitz left Fort Ross in 1867, he disposed of his land near Fort Ross in two main parcels: some 7,000 acres, including the fort, were sold to James Dixon for \$35,000, and another 7,000 acres went to Charles Snowden Fairfax for \$25,000. There is some evidence that Dixon and Fairfax may have entered into a partnership to more effectively operate their newly acquired property. But it was Dixon who was in charge, for Fairfax apparently seldom, if ever, came to Fort Ross.

Dixon, born in Ireland of middle-class origins, emigrated to the United States around 1848, when he was 18 years old. His reasons for leaving are not clear, but either before he left, or perhaps on a return visit, he became involved in the anti-British, Irish nationalist movement that led to his fear of returning. Once in America, he spent several years in California and by 1855 had established himself in Philadelphia as a merchant, sailing regularly between that city, Jamaica, and New York City. He did well enough in all of his endeavors to be able to continually send money to his family, enabling them to survive the harsh economic conditions in Ireland. Toward the end of 1855, Dixon came back to California, having decided that his best opportunity for success lay in the growing state.

At the time of his purchase at Fort Ross, Dixon had been operating a sawmill near Nicasio in Marin County for some five years. He immediately moved his mill, with a capacity for cutting fifteen thousand board feet of lumber a day, to his new land, first setting it up in Kolmer Gulch and later at a Fort Ross Creek site. In Fort Ross Cove, he built a loading chute and shipped lumber from his mill, taking advantage of one of the best summer harbors on the coast between San Francisco and Eureka. He also built a home, called the "White House", that stood near his Fort Ross Creek mill site. Dixon wrote that he intended to farm one thousand acres of oats, and he also probably operated a dairy. With these enterprises as primary activities, there soon ceased to be a need for many Indians to work as ranch hands. As a result, Dixon instructed that the Kashaya Pomo people move from Fort Ross, ending their centuries-old habitation of the place they called Metini.

In 1873, after most of the timber on the property had been logged, Dixon sold some of his holdings and moved his logging and sawmill operation up the coast. The last known reference to

him was in 1879, when he was appointed postmaster of the Miller post office in Mendocino County, a position he held for about three months. There is some indication that he may have died in a logjam accident.

Charles Fairfax came from a completely different background from that of Dixon. A descendent of a British family that had been granted a sizable tract of land by Charles II in 1649 in what is now the Commonwealth of Virginia, Fairfax was born there in 1829, the fourth generation of American Fairfaxes. He was in line to become the Tenth Lord Fairfax, Baron of Cameron, had he returned to England to claim the title. Instead, he threw aside his opportunity to join the nobility and joined the rush to California for gold in 1849 at the age of twenty. But once there, he soon discovered that a life of physical work was not for him, and he turned to a career in politics.

In 1855, Fairfax married the twenty-year-old Ada Benham, described by her contemporaries as having extraordinary charm and beauty. Ada had been born into a distinguished family as well. Her father was a well-known lawyer and political figure in Ohio and Kentucky, her mother was a duPont, and her uncle, John Caldwell Calhoun, had served as vice president in the administrations of John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. As a wedding gift, the Fairfaxes were given land in Marin County, California, north of San Francisco (at today's town of Fairfax). Here, the couple built a country estate, which they named Bird's Nest Glen. The grounds were artistically landscaped, and imported game birds roamed the estate (in apparent harmony with the family's Irish setters who also had free run of the grounds). As a result of Fairfax's various political positions, including Speaker of the State Assembly, Clerk of the California Supreme Court, and Marin County Supervisor, the couple's circle of friends was wide and diverse, and Bird's Nest Glen was the scene of frequent and lavish parties. It was reported by local observers that there was always champagne cooling in the creek, and Jamaican rum, bourbon whiskey, and crème sherry always on hand in the house.

In 1868, Fairfax led the California delegation to the Democratic National Convention in New York City. Remaining in the East to visit his family, he took ill and died in 1869 of tuberculosis in Baltimore, Maryland; he was forty years old.

The free-spending Fairfax, who had been notoriously unconcerned with money matters in life, left his widow in financial straits in death. Ada's only assets of value were Bird's Nest Glen and the property near Fort Ross. She quickly sold the estate and took up residence at Fort Ross with her mother, a niece, and some servants while she attempted to sell her holdings there. She occupied the former Benitz family home, the modified quarters of the last Russian manager. There, "Lady" Fairfax, as she had come to be known, more for her cordial manner than her entitlement, established a social life heretofore unknown at the remote outpost. A steady stream of houseguests made their way to the Fort, where Ada entertained them in the tradition of the landed gentry, taking them on visits around the countryside to the Gualala River, to the town of Cazadero in the redwoods, and to the ocean beach for picnic outings, the entourage often consisting of as many as eight horse-drawn wagons and carriages.

The sale of her holding at Fort Ross in 1870 did little to provide Ada with much security, and in 1873 she moved to San Francisco and soon thereafter accepted a position with the U.S. Government in Washington, D.C., as an official hostess. There she lived out her life in grand style, becoming known as the "Belle of Washington," entertaining numbers of important guests, among them President Grover Cleveland, future presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, and visiting royalty. Like Charles, she too died of tuberculosis, at the age of fifty three, in Narragansett, Rhode Island, in 1888.

The end of the Dixon/Fairfax period was signaled in 1873 when Dixon sold 2,500 acres of his land at Fort Ross (including the Fort and the chure) and \$10,000 worth of livestock to George Washington Call for \$25,000.

THE CALL PERIOD, 1873-1979

Born in Ohio in 1829, George W. Call had been turned out of his home, along with his brothers, at the age of fourteen. The young George struck out on his own, working at any job he could find to keep himself clothed and fed. He clerked, herded cattle, rafted lumber, cut cord wood, and taught night school in Indiana and Illinois. His travels finally brought him to Missouri, the gateway to the Far West, where, at the age of twenty three, he found a job with a California-bound wagon train as a drover and hunter. He arrived in California in 1852, with "his gun, pistol, one spare woolen shirt, one pair of blankets," and one dollar.

After working briefly in the gold mines, George turned to logging in the Humboldt area of northern California. Here, the six-foot youth, who sported a "reddish white beard" and was proud to say that he weighed one hundred and seventy-two pounds and "ask no odds of any man that don't like me," made enough money to try his enterprising skills in booming San Francisco. Among other ventures, he connected with a future associate of P.T. Barnum, John "Grizzly" Adams, and financed the well-known hunter's animal show. But, before long, plagued by a persistent respiratory ailment and possibly concerned that his businesses could decline in the depression that hit the local economy of San Francisco in the late 1850s, George decided to make a change. In settlement of money due him from Grizzly, he appropriated some bears from Grizzly's menagerie and sailed for Latin America, staging bear and bull fights for the populace along the way. He gave that up after a time to become a subcontractor building railroads in Chile for Henry "Honest Harry" Meiggs, a land promoter who had left San Francisco under a cloud after an embezzlement scandal. With his stake from railroading, Call opened Chile's first jute factory in Valparaiso, manufacturing gunny sacks for the nitrate and guano trade.

In the mid-1860s, George met attractive Mercedes Lelva, a fifteen-year-old Chilean girl who had been orphaned and was being reared by relatives on their wheat *estancia*. Their introduction was unorthodox but effective: at a dance, he stepped on the hem of her dress to get her attention, and so the courtship began, culminating in their marriage in 1866. When their first son was born in 1872, George decided to leave Chile for California in order to raise his son there at a time when there was a new surge of prosperity as a result of the great silver discoveries in neighboring Nevada. With his wife, two young daughters, an infant son, and \$45,000 in gold coin, George embarked on a sailing ship bound for San Francisco. Once he arrived, he began to trade in real estate and look about for a permanent place to settle, an endeavor that took on some priority with the birth of the couple's third daughter. He sought a place in the country, where he might do some ranching and where, as Mercedes hoped, there were apple orchards. That place turned out to be Fort Ross.

George Call recognized the potential of the site as a profitable ranch holding, but he also appreciated the beguiling setting of upland, seacoast, and forest that gave the place its appealing wilderness character. Together, he and Mercedes set about to make it their family home, and a place to welcome visitors.

In 1873, many of the buildings of the Russian period remained virtually intact, while others had fallen into disrepair or had been modified to reflect the needs of its post-Russian owners. Within the old stockade, the Rotchev House, with its two-story addition, became the first Call family residence, as it had for the Benitz and Ada Fairfax families. Here, two more Call daughters were born. In 1878, the Call's permanent home was completed, and the family settled in, adding two boys and another girl to the family.

Soon after the Calls moved out of the Rotchev House, George Call leased the building to Cushman and Leonard, who operated it as the Fort Ross Hotel for about a year and a half. In

early 1882, William C. Morgan took over operation of the hotel complex and operated it until 1906 (when the Fort became the property of the State of California), his brother, George W. Morgan, joining him in partnership between 1888 and 1894. The hotel provided lodging for the increasing number of visitors arriving from San Francisco and other parts of California, among them horticulturist Luther Burbank and writer Gertrude Atherton. Other Russian buildings were also leased by Call, and they became part of the hotel complex. The Russian Officials Quarters was renovated—the east end of the building was used to house a saloon serving local workers and the hotel trade, the middle portion of the building became a storage room, and the north end a laundry. In addition, Call converted the Russian Old Warehouse to a dance hall, where local residents and visitors joined the family for festive musical evenings. An assortment of other structures—the chapel, the blockhouses, barns, wagon sheds, and a blacksmith shop—also still stood. Just outside the stockade was another building that became the store, post office, and telegraph office.

A half mile to the northeast, beyond the stockade, was the orchard planted by the Russians, which was visible from the family residence; not far away was the Benitz orchard. To the northwest, a short way away, was the dairy. Herds of up to 470 dairy cows, heifers, steers, bulls, and calves grazed on nearby hills. The yield of butter from the dairy was of high quality and in great demand in San Francisco. For the twenty-five-year period between 1875 and 1899, the Call Ranch, on the average, produced and shipped more than 20,000 pounds of butter a year.

During the 1870s and 1880s, the main lifeline between Fort Ross and the outside world was still the sea. Travel to the Fort over long distances by stagecoach was possible but arduous owing to rough roadbeds, numerous hills, landslides, infrequent rest stops, and occasional encounters with outlaws, including Black Bart and Dick Fellows. The transport of goods by sea had been employed traditionally by all previous owners, and Call, recognizing the advantage of enlarging this trade, constructed a wharf and warehouse in the cove near the Dixon chute; these facilities not only handled sizable shipments of Fort Ross produce but also those of neighboring farms and ranches. Produce and timber products were hauled to Fort Ross by four- and six-horse wagon teams over narrow, winding, and sometimes steep dirt roads. Up to twenty-five teams from as far away as fifteen miles came to store their products on the bluff near the top of the chute. When schooners were in port, the jingle of harness bells added a festive note to the clamor of loading operations (however, harness bells had a serious purpose—to warn wagon drivers of a team's approach on the narrow, often foggy roads). In 1877, eighty-six vessels loaded cargo at the Fort Ross chute, including timber products, tan-oak bark, dairy products, apples, hides, beef, hogs, and abalone. The latter were gathered and shipped by the Ah Jim and Ah Fook Chinese gangs, who were hired by Call between 1875 and 1885 to build and maintain a road along the cliffs down the coast from Fort Ross, as well as other roads, and to work at the chute. In early 1897, Call's gasoline schooner, *La Chilena*, began weekly service to San Francisco, and it proved so successful that a larger vessel, the *Mary C.*, was purchased in early 1899 to take over the run. Passengers, live animals, goods, and raw materials constituted "down-freight" to San Francisco, an 8- to 10-hour voyage. "Up-freight" included flour, sugar, salt, crackers, tools, and medicines.

Within ten years, Call had transformed Fort Ross into one of the most active small shipping, communications, and business centers along the Northern California coast. He had also expanded his land holdings to more than 7,000 acres.

Now a heavy-set, squire-like figure, invariably dressed in a dark woolen suit, starched white shirt and necktie, made-to-order boots, a derby hat, and carrying a cane, George Call presided over his domain in a manner that befitted his hard-earned affluence. He supervised maritime affairs at the cove and acted as general manager of the ranch, assisted by foreman John Daly, who handled the livestock and harvesting operations. Another assistant foreman, John Doda, who was among a number of Italian-Swiss dairy workers at Fort Ross, managed the dairy. Between times, Call traded now and again in real estate, resolved disputes among local people with

judicious fairness, entertained children with stories of an adventurer he called "Illinois George" (who was remarkably like himself), and occasionally slipped over to the saloon for a game of cards.

For her part, Mercedes, her "musical Spanish accent" ever-present and her brilliant dark eyes missing nothing, supervised the household, caring for their nine children with the help of a governess, a cook, and a kitchen maid. The hospitality of the Calls was legendary, and their home was rarely without visitors. Some guests were inadvertent, such as when the passenger steamer *Pomona* drove onto a rock in Fort Ross Cove in 1908, and Mercedes was able to marshal temporary shelter and meals for some eighty survivors at a moment's notice. Mercedes, with the help of a hired man, also found time to cultivate an extensive flower garden, known far and wide for its profusion and unusual species—banana passion flower, angel's trumpet, heliotrope, a rare black lily, datura, and forty varieties of prize-winning fuchsia. Ship captains who called at the cove often brought her exotic plants from their travels, some of which she hybridized along with native plants.

George and Mercedes solved the matter of their children's early education in the idyllic but remote site by some clever maneuvering. Fifteen students were required by the education authorities to qualify a community to establish a school. To fill the required complement of scholars, George made it a point to hire help who had families, and he invited friends with children to take up residence on the ranch. He also went so far as to require his oldest daughter to repeat the eighth grade two times. The first classes were held in a small building constructed behind the Call house. Later, in late 1884, George had a one-room school house built on the bluff overlooking the cove. It was light and airy, with a stove in one corner, a blackboard, and a bucket of fresh water with a dipper always handy to slake youthful thirst.

A highlight of the school week was "schooner day", when the *Mary C.* put into Ross harbor on her weekly visit. To the children watching from the schoolhouse, the tricky procedure of hoisting the arriving cargo safely off the ship and loading outgoing goods onto it by way of the fragile-looking chute was far more exciting than their lessons, and from the moment the vessel dropped anchor until she departed there was little book learning.

When it came time for the children to go to high school, George bought a house in San Francisco, and the children spent the school year in the city. But they counted the days until they could return to the ranch. Ultimately, all the girls received teacher's certificates at a normal school in San Francisco, and the boys received surveyor's certificates from a technical school. It was George's decree that "my girls will be teachers and my boys engineers." However, except for the two girls who taught at Fort Ross school, none of the others followed the vocations selected by their father, choosing other occupations instead.

Of the Call daughters and sons, three spent their lifetimes at the ranch after their schooling, and two others bought and resided on neighboring property. The rest, who lived farther away, came often to the ranch, and throughout the years Fort Ross was the scene of grand reunions of family and friends from near and far. For amusement there were picnics, swimming, croquet, horseback riding, and horse racing on their racetrack. In the evening, there were hayrides, campfires, sing-alongs, and dances in the ballroom that had been gaily decorated with boughs of redwood, fresh flowers, and ornaments. In the 1880s-1890s, Fort Ross became the acknowledged social center of the surrounding countryside.

At the turn of the century, a move toward preserving Fort Ross as an historic site was initiated by Oakland newspaper publisher Joseph R. Knowland, Sr., then a state senator (1902-1904). As chairman of the recently formed California Historical Landmarks League, Knowland, along with other members of the League, advocated raising funds to buy historic landmarks and deed them to the people of California. The idea appealed to George Call, and, on

July 25, 1903, he negotiated the sale of two and a half acres of his property to the League, which included the Fort and its buildings, for \$3,000. On March 23, 1906, the property was deeded to California and its agency, the Sutter's Fort Board of Commissioners (the forerunner of the California State Parks Commission), with William Randolph Hearst, San Francisco publisher and civic leader, acting as Trustee for the League.

George Washington Call died in San Francisco in 1907 at the age of seventy eight. Mercedes continued to live at the ranch until shortly before her death in Santa Rosa in 1933. She took an active part in preserving the place of Fort Ross in history, loaning Russian artifacts to San Francisco's de Young Museum for display and becoming quite involved in finding the lost Russian-cast chapel bell. But her garden was her joy. When she was asked during her twenty-six years of widowhood if she were not sometimes lonely, Mercedes quickly and emphatically answered, "Never, so long as I can be with my flowers!"

At the death of their father, Carlos Asa and George Harry Call took over management of the ranch and the shipping operation. The ranch continued to operate as before—with animal, dairy, and timber products regularly produced and shipped out of the cove. However, by the 1920s, changing markets and the development of alternative means of land transportation reduced the viability of shipping, so the Call brothers sold the chute equipment and ceased shipping operations at Fort Ross in 1921. They also split the management of the ranch. George took over management of the inland half of the ranch and built a ranch complex on the ridge road above the fort. Carlos took over the coastal half and continued to reside at Fort Ross and use the old ranch facilities. In 1923, the cattle and dairy business was discontinued, and sheep-raising became the major ranching operation.

A new element was briefly added to the ranch routine during World War II when the U.S. Coast Guard established a station at Fort Ross. This was one of many that were to provide early warning of possible enemy activity along the California north coast. The station was located in an old house next to the chapel, and the lookout site was located above Fort Ross Cove with a sweeping view of the coast. The five-man contingent posted to the station (some of whose wives were permitted to accompany them), manned the telephone-booth-sized lookout from January 1942 until August 1945 in a round-the-clock rotation of watches. No unusual activity was ever observed, and to keep loneliness and boredom at bay, the off-duty Coastguardsmen often helped with ranch chores, a welcome event in view of the manpower shortage during the war.

In addition to managing the every day activities of the coastal part of the ranch, Carlos Call found time to develop new facilities and techniques for his sheep business. An important improvement was instituting an innovative procedure for handling the winter lambing process so that the survival rate of ewes and newborn lambs increased significantly. He also made a point of continuing the volunteer climatological observations at the Fort Ross station founded by his father in 1874, and, in April 1972, he received the National Weather Service Special Service Award for his record-setting sixty-four unbroken years of weather measurements. Still actively managing the coastal portion of the ranch in his late eighties, Carlos was able to elaborate on much of the history of the Ranch era and was in frequent demand by interviewers. The last resident of Fort Ross among the Call children, he died in late 1972. The last of the Call children died in 1976.

In his will, George Washington Call had placed certain conditions and restrictions on the sale or division of the Fort Ross property. The effect of these stipulations was the protection of Fort Ross from encroaching urban and commercial development. Thus, when the State of California began to acquire land to enlarge the site of historic Fort Ross in 1961, the land was available and essentially unchanged. The State acquired more than 700 acres at Fort Ross before the Call family sold the remainder of their sizable holdings to a timber corporation in 1979, bringing to a close the one-hundred-and-six-year tenancy of the family at Fort Ross.

SELECTED RANCH AND PARK ERA ACTIVITIES
OF THE FORT ROSS AREA

Following is a list of some Ranch and Park Era transactions relating to the transfer of property, agreements, comings/goings, and so forth in the Fort Ross area, including the Muñiz Rancho and related areas.

- 1841--Grant of Land (the Bodega Rancho) to Victor Pruden by the Mexican authorities; this grant was not finally confirmed. [SOURCE: "History of California", Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume IV, page 670.]
- 6 or 7 September 1841--Agreement between the Russian-American Company and John A. (Johann Augustus) Sutter for the purchase of real property at Fort Ross, Bodega Bay, and the outlying ranchos. [SOURCES: Diary 3, John A. Sutter, "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, page 86; Personal Reminiscences, John A. Sutter, "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, pages 87 and 88.]
- Late October 1841--Robert Livermore (in charge), Joel P. Walker, Ezekiel Merritt, and 30 Indian vaqueros were assigned by Sutter to drive stock (approximately 1,700 head of cattle, 940 horses and mules, and 900 sheep) from the coast to his Hock Farm near present day Marysville; Sutter, in his diary, indicated the date was 28 September, but other letters of his, as well as writings of Walker, indicate that late October was the earliest it could have occurred. [SOURCES: "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, page 120; letter from Sutter to Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo dated 19 September 1841, "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, page 79; and inventory of stock included in undated offer for sale from Petr Stapanovich Kostromitinov to Vallejo, "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, page 72; "History of California", Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume IV, page 230.]
- Late October 1841--Robert T. Ridley appointed manager at Fort Ross by Sutter; most Russians and their personal possessions were gone from the Fort Ross and Bodega Bay area and Ridley was on-site by 12 December 1841. [SOURCES: letter from Vallejo to the Minister of War and Marine dated 12 December 1841, "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, pages 80 and 81; "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, pages 120, 123, 125, and 131; "Fool's Gold", Richard Dillon, 1967, page 133; Personal Reminiscences, John A. Sutter, "The Russians in

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California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, page 88; "History of California", Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume IV, page 233.]

- 12 December 1841--Deed from **Alexander Gavrilovich Rotchev** to Sutter for all land between Point Reyes and Cape Mendocino (this "unofficial" deed did not surface until 1857/59--see 1 October 1857, 6 January 1859, 20 May 1859, and other transaction entries). [SOURCES: "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, pages 81 and 82; "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, page 121.]
- 13 December 1841--Deed from the Russian-American Company to Sutter for the Russian-American Company possessions from Bodega Bay to Fort Ross (not including the land) was signed in Yerba Buena before Mexican authorities, with **Jean Jacques Vieget** and **Jacob Primar Leese** as witnesses (this was the official deed); purchase price was \$30,000. [SOURCES: Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, pages 82-84; "Fool's Gold", Richard Dillon, 1967, page 116; "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, page 122.]
- 19 December 1841--The Russians packed all items not sold to Sutter and departed to Alaska by this date, except for one ship (the *Constantine*) on which Rotchev and his wife, **Elena (Helena)**, went to San Francisco. [SOURCES: Letter from Kostromitinov to Juan Bautista Alvarado, "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, pages 81 and 82; "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, pages 84 and 85.]
- 1 January 1842--The last Russian ship (the *Constantine*) with Rotchev and Elena on board departed to Alaska from San Francisco. [SOURCE: "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, page 123.]
- 11 January 1842--**John Bidwell** arrived at Fort Ross (he left Sutter's Fort on 8 January 1842 and travelled for three days). [SOURCES: John Bidwell's journal; "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, pages 131-133; "Fool's Gold", Richard Dillon, 1967, page 133; "History of California", Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume II, page 719 and Volume IV, page 233.]
- April 1842--Bidwell replaced Ridley as manager at Fort Ross (he remained in charge for 14 months). [SOURCES: Bidwell's memoirs, "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, pages 131-133.]
- Summer 1843--**Samuel Smith** was made manager by Sutter when Bidwell left Fort Ross (before Benitz arrived in the Fall of

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1843); the lease agreement of 14 May 1845 between Sutter and Benitz stated that Benitz was to be responsible for all property that was "delivered to him by Samuel Smith, formerly in charge of the establishment". [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Powers of Attorney, Page 22, of Sonoma County records. SOURCES: 14 May 1845 Agreement between Sutter and Benitz, Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 21; Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 15 and 16.]

- Fall 1843--**William Otto Benitz** became Sutter's las. manager at Fort Ross (note that Bidwell's 14-month term [which would be from April 1842 to June 1843] does not coincide with Benitz' arrival date, and Samuel Smith may have been placed in charge during this interim period). [SOURCES: "Sutter of California", Julian Dana, 1934, page 152; "History of Sonoma County", 1879, page 373; "Fool's Gold", Richard Dillon, 1967, page 201; John Bidwell's memoirs; "Alfred Benitz", Olga Benitz, 1952, pages 14 and 22; "History of California", Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume 11, page 716.]
- 14 May 1845--Agreement between Sutter and Benitz for the "privilege of occupying the establishment of Ross for such a length of time as the said Wm. Benitz may desire" (recorded on 1 August 1845). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Powers of Attorney, Page 22, of Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 21; Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 15 and 16.]
- 1845--Partnership agreement between Benitz and **Ernest Rufus** to run the "**Fort Ross Ranch**" (Muñiz Rancho) and a separate agreement to apply for the German Rancho in Rufus' name (neither agreement recorded). [REFERENCE: Testimony of William Benitz, Bihler versus Platt, 1874, California State Archives, Box 4514, File 4514 and Box 81, File 2130. SOURCE: Copy of transcript of Benitz testimony from files of Susan Clark, 15 August 1989.]
- 4 December 1845--Grant of land (the **Muñiz Rancho** [s. netimes misspelled "Muñez" or "Mooney"]) to **Manuel Torres** by **Governor Pio Pico** (four square leagues, 17,760.75 acres, bounded by the Russian River to the south, the sea to the west, the Russian settlement to the north, and the "Sierra" to the east). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77, Sonoma County Records; recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office. SOURCES: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 7; "History of Sonoma County", 1879, page 374; "History of California", Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume V, page 751.]
- 8 April 1846--Grant of land (the **German Rancho**) to Ernest Rufus by Governor Pio Pico (17,580 acres, bounded by the Pacific Ocean and on the north by the Gualala River); Benitz

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claimed in court testimony that he and Rufus were partners in this rancho. [REFERENCES: Liber "C" of Deeds, Page 251, Sonoma County Records; Testimony of William Benitz, Bibler versus Platt, 1874, California State Archives, Box 4514, File 4514 and Box 81, File 2130; Expediente Number 507, California State Archives, Spanish Archive T5 Page 507. SOURCES: Copies of transcript of Benitz testimony and Expediente Number 507 from files of Susan Clark, 15 August 1989; "History of Sonoma County", 1879, pages 374 and 375; letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]

- April 1845--Grant of land (the **Bodega Rancho**) to **Captain Stephen Smith** (who was married to Manuel Torres' sister, **Manuela Torres**) by Governor Pio Pico (eight square leagues, 35,487 acres, from the Russian River south to the Bodega area); Captain Smith applied for the grant on 14 September 1844, and the land was granted to him on the condition that he would become a Catholic, marry an Hispanic, become a citizen of Mexico, and maintain a steam saw mill on his land. [SOURCES: "History of Sonoma County", 1879, pages 190 and 191; "The Journal", Sonoma County Historical Society, 1983, Number 2, pages 3 and 4; "History of California", Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume V, page 724.]
- 24 April 1849--Unknown grant (in Sonoma) from Benitz to Rufus for an unknown amount. [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of Deeds, Page 192, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- 8 June 1849--Unknown grant from Rufus to Benitz "et al" for an unknown amount (the existence of this transaction needs to be confirmed, as a second search in county records failed to find it). [REFERENCE: Liber 12 of Deeds, Page 346, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Letter from Ruth Burke, 28 August 1989; letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- 18 February 1850--Establishment of Mendocino and Sonoma County boundaries by the State of California legislature; the Mendocino/Sonoma County boundary was the middle of the Russian River, which was also the boundary of the Muñiz Rancho (Mendocino County was administered by Sonoma County). [SOURCE: "California County Boundaries", Owen C. Coy, 1973, page 262.]
- 15 January 1851--Unknown grant from Benitz to **Charles Van Geldern** for an unknown amount. [REFERENCE: Liber "F" of Deeds, Page 72, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- 17 May 1851--Contract to Convey, agreement for Torres to sell the Muñiz Rancho to William Benitz and **Charles Theodor Meyer** (Meyers) for \$5,000 (recorded on 10 April 1854). [REFERENCE:

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Liber "K" of Deeds, Page 110, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 13.]

- 17 February 1852--Petition filed by Torres with the **Commissioners of the General Land Office of the United States** (pursuant to the Act of Congress of 1851) to ascertain and settle his title to the Mexican Grant (four square leagues north of the Russian River). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77, Sonoma County Records (recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office). SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 7.]
- 28 October 1852--Pre-emption claim by **Christian Frederick Ruoff** for 160 acres at the north side of the Muñiz Rancho (recorded on 28 October 1852). (REFERENCE: Liber E of Deeds, Page 325 Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 67.)
- 27 December 1853--The **Board of Land Commissioners** rendered a Decree of Confirmation in favor of Torres land claim petition. [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77, Sonoma County Records (recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office). SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 7.]
- 27 February 1854--Declaratory Statement for Pre-emption by **George Bernard** for 160 acres in the northwest corner of the Muñiz Rancho, filed in the Office of the Registrar at Benicia; this is referenced in the Possessory Claim transaction of 3 February 1863. [SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 61.]
- 1855--Movement of the Mendocino/Sonoma county boundary by an act of the **State of California Legislature** from the middle of the Russian River to a point on the coast one mile northwesterly from Fort Ross, running from there in a direct line to the northwest corner of Napa County. [SOURCE: "California County Boundaries", Owen C. Coy, 1973, page 263.]
- 1 May 1855--Benitz paid Meyer \$22,500 for Meyer's share of the Muñiz Rancho (Benitz stated that he bought the property earlier, and this date is the date of his scheduled payment). [SOURCE: Letter from Benitz to his brother Thadeus (who lived in Germany), dated 8 March 1855.]
- 4 June 1855--Grant of an unknown amount of land (in the German Rancho) from Benitz and Meyer to **Charles Wagner** and **William Bihler** for an unknown amount. [REFERENCE: Liber "N" of Deeds, Page 281, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Letter from Susan Clark, 21 November 1988; letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]

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- 11 August 1855--Deed from Meyer to Benitz for Meyer's share of the Muñiz Rancho for \$1 (recorded on 14 August 1855). [REFERENCE: Liber "N" of Deeds, Page 321, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 15; letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1969.]
- 17 October 1855--Decree by the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, in response to an appeal by Torres of the Decree of Confirmation, that Torres' was "a good and valid claim". [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77, Sonoma County Records (recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office). SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 7.]
- 1856--R.W. Kibbe was licensed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to operate a ferry across the Russian River about a mile above the mouth of the river for a period of six months; he refused to continue the service, because it did not pay. Hugh Patton was subsequently given a license. [SOURCE: "History of Sonoma County, California", edited by Ernest Latimer Finley, published by The Press Democrat Publishing Company, 1937, page 352.]
- 22 September 1856--William O. Benitz wrote in a letter from Fort Ross to Germany that "next winter I shall also build a 12 mile-long road across my camp. It will cost a lot of work, because there is no road at all from here." [SOURCE: copy of translated letter from Benitz to his brother, Thadeus, in Germany, dated 22 September 1856.]
- 13 April 1857--Deed from Torres to Benitz for the Muñiz Rancho; purchase price was (as previously agreed on 17 May 1851) \$5,000 (recorded on 14 April 1857). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Deeds, Page 684, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 17 and 19; copy of note card from files of Susan Clark, 15 August 1989.]
- 7 May 1857--Decreed by the United States Attorney General that there would be no more appeals, giving Torres permission to proceed with steps to complete the process for acquiring a U.S. land patent for the Muñiz Rancho. [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77, Sonoma County Records (recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office). SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 9.]
- 22 May 1857--Completion of "Field Notes of the Obsolete Survey of the Rancho Muñiz", under the instructions of H.A. Higley, Deputy Surveyor; this document contains field notes of the "final" survey, and starts out stating: "Rancho Muñiz, confirmed to William Benitz, May 25, 1857". [REFERENCE: The document has page numbers from 500 to 510, and the top of the

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first page indicates "Vol.285-p.629". SOURCE: Glenn Farris, Archaeologist II, California Department of Parks and Recreation.)

- 1 (or 5) October 1857--Deed from **T.W.S. Messick** to **Anna Sutter** (Sutter's wife) and **Anna Eliza Engler** (Sutter's daughter) for all of Messick's rights to the "Russian Tract" or "Fort Ross Property" in Mendocino, Sonoma, and Mendocino Counties for \$10--this is the first official record available at this time that identifies the existence of this document that is described in the transaction entry for 12 December 1841; a note indicated that "the records did not show how Messick acquired an interest in this property" (recorded in Yuba County on 16 October 1857), and it appears that Sutter might have previously used this "Russian" deed to help pay off some of his debts. [REFERENCE: Liber 6 of Deeds, Page 248, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 17 and 18; Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 27.]
- 30 October 1857--Unknown grant from **Nevell J.N. Brockman** to **Benitz** for an unknown amount. [REFERENCE: Liber "N" of Deeds, Page 152, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- November 1857--William O. Benitz was licensed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to operate a ferry across the Russian River on the road leading from Bodega Bay to Fort Ross (on his own land, about a mile above the mouth of the river); he was required to file a bond of \$1,100. The ferry was maintained by Benitz for some years, his license being renewed when necessary; tolls were: man and horse, 50¢; horse and buggy, \$1.50; wagon and two horses or oxen, \$1.50; wagon and four horses or oxen, \$2; loose horses or cattle, 10¢ a head; loose hogs or sheep, 5¢ a head; and foot passenger, 25¢. [SOURCE: "History of Sonoma County, California", edited by Ernest Latimer Finley, published by The Press Democrat Publishing Company, 1937, page 12.]
- 1859--Movement of the Mendocino/Sonoma county boundary by an act of the State of California legislature from a point on the coast one mile northwesterly from Fort Ross (running in a direct line from there to the northwest corner of Napa County) to the middle of the Gualala River. [SOURCE: "California County Boundaries", Owen C. Coy, 1973, page 265.]
- 6 January 1859--Filing of "Map of the Land Granted by Spain in 1812 (sic) to the Russian-American Fur (sic) Company" (between Point Drake [Reyes] and Cape Mendocino, and extending inland 3 Spanish Leagues [7 miles, 3.2 chains, 31 links]) by **William Muldrew**, consisting of four drawings showing breakdown of all

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tracts of land, whereas the "original" consisted of only one sheet; this filing has inaccuracies, and it is related to the 12 December 1841 "unofficial" deed from the Russian-American Company to Sutter and to subsequent attempts by Muldrew, et al to "extort" money from land holder based upon an unsupportable claim. [SOURCE: Letter from John McKenzie, 23 June 1983.]

- * 25 January 1859--Unknown grant from **William M. Gillespie** (Gillespie ?) to Benitz for an unknown amount. [REFERENCE: Liber 8 of Deeds, Page 499, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- * 9 March 1859--Lease from Benitz to **John Wood and Isaac Sinshwimer**, granting the right to erect a sawmill and to cut and haul timber for the term of five years on the northern portion of the Muñiz Rancho (recorded on 28 March 1858). [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of Mortgages, Page 80, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 23.]
- * 7 May 1859--Unknown grant from Rufus to Benitz for an unknown amount. [REFERENCE: Liber 8 of Deeds, Page 708, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- * 20 May 1859--Deed from Sutter, Anna Sutter, and Anna Eliza Engler to William Muldrew (five-eighths share), **George R. Moore** (one-half of one-eighth share), and **Daniel W. Walty** (one-half of one-eighth share) of the land between Point Reyes and Cape Mendocino, the land of the Rotchev deed of 12 December 1841, for \$6,700 and the release of a mortgage on the Hock Farm that was held by Muldrew (recorded on 6 June 1859 in Sonoma County, and on 1 February 1860 in Marin County). [REFERENCES: Liber 8 of Deeds, Page 702, Sonoma County Records; Liber "C" of Deeds, Page 286, Marin County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 19 and 20; Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 29 and 31.]
- * 13 July 1859--Unknown grant from Ernest Rufus to **Frederica Rufus** for an unknown amount. [REFERENCE: Liber 9, Page 54, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- * 20 July 1859--Deed from Sutter to Anna Eliza Engler for the remaining two-eighths share of the land between Point Reyes and Cape Mendocino (that was deeded to Sutter by Rotchev on 12 December 1841) for \$10 and "the natural love and affection which 1st party has and leaves to 2nd party" (recorded on 1 August 1859). [REFERENCE: Liber 9 of Deeds, Page 87, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 21 and 22; Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 33.]

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- 20 July 1859--Power of Attorney assigned from Sutter, Anna Sutter, and Anna Eliza Engler to **Emil Victor Sutter** (Sutter's son) to enter upon and take possession of any and all land (that was deeded to Sutter by Rotchev on 12 December 1841) between Point Reyes and Cape Mendocino (recorded on 1 August 1859). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Powers of Attorney, Page 110, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 23 and 24; Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 35 and 37.]
- 4 October 1859--Authentication by the **Surveyor General of California** of a plat and certificate of the survey of the Muñiz Rancho commissioned by Torres and completed on 10 August 1859 by **R.C. Matthewson**, Deputy U.S. Surveyor. [REFERENCES: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77, Sonoma County Records (recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office); Liber 9 of Deeds, Page 431, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 26; Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 9 and 45.]
- 5 November 1859--Deed from Sutter, Anna Sutter, Anna Eliza Engler, William Muldrew, George R. Moore, and Daniel W. Welty to Benitz for the Muñiz Rancho land for \$6,000 (recorded on 17 November 1859); Benitz stated in a letter that the total cost to him was \$8,000. [REFERENCE: Liber 9 of Deeds, Page 431, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 25, 26, and 27; Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 43, 45, and 47; letter from Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989; copy of translated letter from Benitz to his brother, Thadeus, in Germany, dated 18 January 1863.]
- 5 November 1859--Release from Sutter, Anna Sutter, Anna Eliza Engler, William Muldrew, George R. Moore, and Daniel W. Welty to Benitz for any future action regarding the Muñiz Rancho land for \$1 (recorded on 17 November 1859). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Miscellaneous Records, Page 12, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 29 and 30.]
- 12 November 1859--Power of Attorney assigned from Sutter, Anna Sutter, and Anna Eliza Engler to Emil V. Sutter to enter upon and take possession of any and all land (that was deeded to Sutter by Rotchev on 12 December 1841) between Point Reyes and Cape Mendocino (recorded on 16 November 1859). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Powers of Attorney, starting at Page 119, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 24; Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 37.]
- 4 February 1860--Land Patent granted to Torres for the Muñiz Rancho by the United States of America, signed by **President James Buchanan** (recorded by the General Land Office on 27 June 1860). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77,

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Sonoma County Records (recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office). SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 7, 9, and 11.]

- 24 March 1860--Power of Attorney from Benitz to Meyers (recorded on 28 March 1860). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Powers of Attorney, Page 135, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Copy of note card from files of Susan Clark, 15 August 1989.]
- 22 June 1860--Certification by the District Judge of the Seventh Judicial District of the County of Sonoma that publication of land patent information by Torres for the Muñiz Rancho was genuine. [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Land Patents, Page 77, Sonoma County Records (recorded in Volume 2, Page 442 by the General Land Office). SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 11.]
- 31 October 1860--Deed of Assignment from Wood and Sinsheimer to **George Lucas** for an undivided half interest in the timber lease from Benitz of 9 March 1859; the cost of the transaction was not given (recorded on 9 November 1860 and re-recorded on 22 November 1860). [REFERENCES: Liber "A" of Assignments, Page 192, Sonoma County Records; Liber "A" of Assignments, Page 196, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 25.]
- 31 October 1860--Deed of Assignment from Lucas to **Cesar C. Schnepfel** for all of Lucas' interest (one half) in the 9 March 1860 timber lease of Benitz, which was assigned to Lucas on 31 October 1860 (recorded on 9 November 1860). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Assignments, Page 195, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 25.]
- 20 December 1860--Deed of Assignment from Wood to **Phillipp Kalkmann** for all of Wood's remaining interest (one fourth) in the timber lease from Benitz of 9 March 1859, which was acquired on 31 October 1860 (recorded on 22 December 1860). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Deeds, Page 231, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 25.]
- 14 January 1861--Deed of Assignment from Sinsheimer to Kalkmann for all of Sinsheimer's remaining interest (one fourth) in the timber lease from Benitz of 9 March 1859, which was acquired on 31 October 1860 (recorded on 15 January 1861). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Assignments, Page 217, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 25.]
- 1 April 1861--Deed of Assignment from Schnepfel to **Alfred Borel** for all of Schnepfel's interest (one half) in the sawmill/timber lease of 9 March 1859, which was assigned to him on 31 October 1860 (recorded on 19 September 1861).

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[REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Assignments, Page 265, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 2.]

- 2 February 1863--Possessory Claim by **Jesse M. Blanchard** for 160 acres at the northwest corner of the Muñiz Rancho; this was previously pre-empted as described in transaction of 27 February 1854 (recorded on 3 February 1863). [REFERENCE: Liber 3 of Possessory Claims, Pages 333 and 335, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 61 and 63.]
- 23 February 1863--Establishment of Timber Cove Post Office, **Fred Helmke** appointed as Postmaster. [SOURCE: "History of Sonoma County", 1879, page 379.]
- 21 March (or November) 1863--Agreement between **Benitz** and **William J. Whiteside, I.R. Fine, A. Marstadt, J. Vandernoot, Thomas C. Schlosser, C. Poehlmann, Conrad Temple, Edward Commins, and Isaac Bernard** conveying the right to prospect for coal on the Muñiz Rancho for a period of ten years in consideration of one-tenth of the proceeds. This, and subsequent related actions, are probably related to the letters "4 - 63" carved in a rock about 100 feet due east of the east sally port in the fort. [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Bonds and Agreements, Page 62, Sonoma County Records; Liber 14 of Deeds, Pages 522 and 523, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 53; copy of handwritten copy of deed from Sonoma County records, provided by John McKenzie, which provide: a complete list of names of people in the agreement.]
- 23 July 1863--Agreement between **Benitz** and **W.W. Rudupeth, Thomas (or F.) M. Ward, and Moses Davis** giving them three-fourths interest in a mineral ledge on the Muñiz Rancho in return for one-fourth interest in the mineral ledge outside and within 6,000 feet of the boundary of the Muñiz Rancho; the company formed by this agreement was named the **Ottilla Copper and Silver Mining Company** (recorded on 31 July 1863, re-recorded on 28 August 1863). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Bonds and Agreements, Pages 49 and 53, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 53; Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 49 and 51.]
- 21 November 1863--Agreement between **Benitz** and **Marstadt, Poehlmann, and Temple, Trustees of the Fort Ross Coal Mine Company** (of Petaluma) for the right to prospect for coal and to cut any timber, build any roads, houses, wharfs, etc. related to the business (except that building any tavern or other public house was prohibited without permission) on the southern half of **Benitz'** Muñiz Ranch for a period of ten years in consideration of one-tenth of any proceeds (recorded on 23

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November 1863). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Bonds and Agreements, Page 62, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: copy of handwritten copy of agreement from Sonoma County records, provided by John McKenzie.]

- 18 December 1863--Deed from Whiteside, Fine, Marstadt, Vandernoot, Schlosser, Poehlmann, Temple, Commins, and Bernard to the Fort Ross Coal Mining Company conveying all interest in mining or a quartz lode on the Muñiz Rancho in return for stock certificates (recorded on 22 December 1863). [REFERENCE: Liber 14 of Deeds, Pages 522 and 523, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 54.]
- 3 April 1865--Agreement between Benitz and Temple, Marstadt, and Poehlmann, Trustees of the Fort Ross Coal Mining Company, giving exclusive right to prospect for coal, petroleum, and all other minerals on the south half of the Muñiz Rancho (recorded on 4 April 1865). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Bonds and Agreements, Page 155, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 54.]
- 3 April 1865--Agreement between Benitz and **Frank W. Shattuck** and **J.L. Bond** for the exclusive right to mine for coal, petroleum, and all other minerals on the northern half Muñiz Rancho for a period of ten years (to be terminated if there was six consecutive months of inactivity) for \$1 and one-tenth of any discoveries (recorded on 4 April 1865). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Bonds and Agreements, Page 152, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 53 and 55.]
- 28 August 1866--Deed from Benitz to **John Kohlmer** (**Kolmer**--son of **Joseph Kolmer**) for 215 acres of land on the extreme northern part of the Muñiz Rancho for "love and affection, etc." (recorded on 24 December 1874). [REFERENCE: Liber 51 of Deeds, Page 287, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 83 and 85; Decree of Final Distribution of the Estate of George Washington Call, Page 18, dated 12 October 1908.]
- 28 August 1866--Deed from Benitz to **William R. Miller** and **William Allison** for 502 acres of land on the extreme northern part of the Muñiz Rancho for \$1,500 (recorded on 30 August 1866). [REFERENCE: Liber 19 of Deeds, Page 481, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 87 and 89.]
- 28 August 1866--Mortgage from Miller and Allison to Benitz covering 502 acres of land for \$1,000 (recorded on 30 August 1866). [REFERENCE: Liber "J" of Mortgages, Page 269, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 91.]

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- 28 August 1866--Deed from Benitz to **Franziaka Blanchard** (wife of Jesse M. Blanchard, formerly **Franziaka Ruoff**) for 103 acres of land on the extreme northern part of the Muñiz Rancho for "love and affection, etc." (recorded on 6 September 1866). [REFERENCE: Liber 19 of Deeds, Page 581, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 57 and 59.]
- 1 March 1867--Deed from Benitz to **James Dixon** for 6,000 to 7,000 acres of land in the Muñiz Rancho for \$30,000 (recorded on 8 March 1867). [REFERENCES: Liber 20 of Deeds, Page 129, Sonoma County Records; Liber 44 of Deeds, Pages 256 through 258, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 31 (in the verbiage of the deed from Benitz to Charles S. Fairfax); "The Sonoma Democrat", 31 May 1873, page 5, column 3 (indicating Dixon owned 6,000 acres); Sonoma County Map, U.S. Coast Guard Survey of 1875 and 1876 (indicating "James Dixon's 7,000 acres"); Decree of Final Distribution of the Estate of George Washington Call, Page 23, dated 12 October 1908; copy of note card from files of Susan Clark, 15 August 1989.]
- Before 3 April 1867--Deed from Benitz to **Arthur Thing** and **Samuel Rion** for an unspecified amount of land in the Muñiz Rancho near the Russian River for an unspecified amount of money. [REFERENCE: Liber 20 of Deeds, Page 175, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 31 (in the verbiage of the deed from Benitz to Charles S. Fairfax).]
- 3 April 1867--Deed from Benitz to **Charles Snowden Fairfax** for 7,000 acres of land in the Muñiz Rancho for \$25,000; a search of County taxes after 20 March 1876 by G.W. Call indicated (on tax record page 324) that Fairfax was delinquent in the amount of \$176.64 in 1867-68 on 6,900 acres and that this amount was subsequently paid (recorded on 10 April 1867). [REFERENCE: Liber 20 of Deeds, Page 175, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 31 and 32; Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of the Preceding Abstract, subsequent to 20 March 1876", page 14.]
- 3 April 1867--Mortgage from Fairfax to Benitz, covering 7,000 acres of land, for \$18,000 (recorded on 10 April 1867). [REFERENCE: Liber "J" of Mortgages, Page 744, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 33.]
- 8 April 1867--Deed from Fairfax to **William Doolan** for 7,000 acres of land for \$5,000 (recorded on 15 April 1867).

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[REFERENCE: Liber 20 of Deeds, Page 284, Sonoma County Records.
SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 35 and 36.]

- 12 September 1867--Advertizement in the Petaluma newspaper:
"the undersigned will sell lots--4,000 acres adjacent to Fort
Ross. Apply to Charles S. Fairfax or Jas. Dixon at the fort
Ross Ranch House." [SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 7 August
1989.]
- 5 February 1868--Release of mortgage of 28 August 1866 on 502
acres of land from Miller and Allison to Benitz of \$1,000
(recorded on 7 February 1868). [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of
Releases, Page 327, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book
of Barbara Black, page 91.]
- 21 May 1868--Lease from Fairfax to **John Rule** for the right to
cut and sell wood and timber for a period of five years on
Fairfax's 7,000 acres for \$2,000 (recorded on 2 June 1868).
[REFERENCE: Liber 23 of Deeds, Page 617, Sonoma County
Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages
37 and 38.]
- 21 May 1868--Deed from Doolan to Fairfax for 3,000 acres of
land (north of Russian Gulch) for \$2; this appears to be the
final amount of land Fairfax ended up holding as a result of
all of his dealings (recorded on 6 June 1868). [REFERENCE:
Liber Liber 24 of Deeds, Page 11, Sonoma County Records.
SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 39 and 40.]
- Before April 1869--Deed from Fairfax to John Rule of an
unspecified amount of land for an unspecified amount of dollars
(Fairfax died in Baltimore, Maryland on 4 April 1869, and
Fairfax made this transaction before his death). [REFERENCE:
Liber 30 of Deeds, Page 284, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE:
Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 47 (in the verbiage
of the 25 July 1870 deed from Ada Fairfax to Jesse Jewell).]
- 10 June 1869--Petition by **Ada Fairfax** to the **Probate Court**
in and for the County of Marin to admit the last will and
testament of Charles Fairfax to probate and be named
administratrix. [REFERENCE: Copy of a handwritten copy of
probate records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call,
pages 41 and 42.]
- 5 July 1869--Petition of Ada Fairfax of 10 June 1869 to the
Probate Court of the County of Marin approved; Charles
Fairfax's will admitted to probate and Ada appointed
administratrix contingent upon her filing a bond in the sum of
\$18,000. [REFERENCE: Copy of a handwritten copy of probate
records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page
44.]

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- 11 August 1869--Bond (\$18,000) filed and approved and Letters of Administration issued to Ada Fairfax in Marin County in regard to the Petition of 10 June 1869 in the matter of the last will and testament of Charles Fairfax. [REFERENCE: Copy of a handwritten copy of probate records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 45.]
- 19 March 1870--Inventory of Wife's Separate Property by Franzisca Blanchard, including the 160 acre **Ruoff Homestead** (see transaction of 28 October 1852) and 103 acres gifted to her by William Benitz on 28 August 1866 (recorded on 19 March 1870). [REFERENCE: Liber "J" of Wife's Separate Property, Page 34, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 69 and 71.]
- 17 June 1870--Release of mortgage of 3 April 1867 from Fairfax to Benitz of \$18,000 (recorded on 22 June 1870). [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of Releases, Page 64 Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 32.]
- 5 July 1870--Claim by "James" (probably Jesse) M. Blanchard for land in the northwest corner of the Muñiz Rancho--see transactions of 28 August 1866 and 2 February 1863 (recorded on 6 July 1870). [REFERENCE: Liber 4 of Possessory Claims, Page 249, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 65.]
- 25 July 1870--Deed from Ada Fairfax to **Jesse Jewell** for an unspecified amount of land (probably 3,000 acres, not including that deeded to John Rule--see transaction entry for Before 3 April 1869) for \$18,000 (recorded on 25 July 1870). [REFERENCE: Liber 30 of Deeds, Page 284, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 47 and 48.]
- 25 July 1870--Mortgage from Jesse Jewell to Ada Fairfax covering the land deeded on this same date for \$10,000, in the form of two promissory notes, each in the amount of \$5,000 and each note to pay interest at 10% per annum; one note was due in one year and the other, if not paid at the end of one year, was to pay interest at the rate of one and one-fourth percent per month (recorded on 28 July 1870). [REFERENCE: Liber "P" of Mortgages, Page 292, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, page 49.]
- 26 July 1870--Assignment by Ad. Fairfax of \$10,000 Mortgage of Jesse Jewell (of 25 July 1870) to **O.J. Preston** and **John J. McKinnon** (recorded on 28 July 1870). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Assignments, Page 619, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, pages 49 and 50.]

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- 1 November 1870--Quit Claim from William Allison to William R. Miller for one-half share of the 502 acres of land purchased from William Benitz on 28 August 1866 for a consideration of \$2,000 (recorded on 25 January 1871). [REFERENCE: Liber 32 of Deeds, Page 204, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 93.]
- 12 July 1871--Deed of Trust between Jesse Jewell and E.W. Burr, Benjamin D. Dean, and the Savings and Loan Society for \$10,500, secured by Jewell's land in the Muñiz Rancho (see transaction entry of 25 July 1870--recorded on 14 July 1871). [REFERENCE: Liber 35 of Deeds, Pages 20 through 26, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 1 through 9.]
- 5 August 1871--Deed from Jesse Jewell to August Mayer for 1,000 acres of land and right of way over Jewell's land for \$15,000 (recorded on 16 August 1871); this was land between Russian Gulch on the downcoast side to what became the "Charles Ranch" (and later the "Black Ranch") on the upcoast side. [REFERENCE: Liber 35 of Deeds, Page 55, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 9 through 12; Decree of Final Distribution of the Estate of George Washington Call, Page 23, dated 12 October 1908.]
- 5 August 1871--Mortgage from Mayer to Jewell, covering the land of the transaction entry of this same date, binding Mayer to pay Jewell's Deed of Trust loan of 12 July 1871 from Burr, Dean, and the Savings and Loan Society (recorded on 16 August 1871). [REFERENCE: Liber "R" of Mortgages, Pages 562 through 566, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 12 through 14.]
- 5 August 1871--Deed from Mayer to Jewell for the privilege of allowing a sawmill to remain on Mayer's land for five years and for a right of way over the northeast corner of Mayer's land for wagons and stock for \$500 (recorded on 16 August 1871). [REFERENCE: Liber 35 of Deeds, Pages 60 through 62, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 14 through 15.]
- Early 1873--Sale by an unknown person to Aaron Schroer of about 2,200 acres (but possibly 2,618 acres, the amount known to have been included in subsequent sales) of land for an unknown amount; this land, which later became the "Eckert Ranch" (see the transaction entries for 1916, 1 February 1924,

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26 September 1978, and February 1981), was just down the coast from that purchased by G.W. Call not long afterwards. [SOURCE: "Santa Rosa Press Democrat" article of February 1981 regarding the estate of Mercedes Call Eckert; "History of Sonoma County", 1879, page 627.]

- 4 June 1873--Deed from Dixon and Ada Fairfax to **George Washington Call** for 2,500 acres of land, the chute and moorings in Fort Ross Bay, and right of way to the chute until a public road was opened for \$25,000 (recorded on 4 June 1873); an additional \$10,000 was paid for the stock (mainly milk cows). [REFERENCE: Liber 42 of Deeds, Pages 245 through 247, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: "The Sonoma Democrat", 31 May 1873, page 5, column 3 (indicating Dixon sold the property during the week, the breakout of the payment, and that the deed would be recorded "next week"); letter from Ruth Burke, 7 August 1989; letter from Ruth Burke, 28 August 1989; copy of recorded deed provided by Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- 4 June 1873--Lease from G.W. Call to Dixon and Ada Fairfax for their use of the chute and ship moorings in Fort Ross Bay and one acre of land around the chute in return for chuting services for a period of five years for Call and any others at the rate of 25¢ for each ton of freight, cord of wood, or one thousand feet of lumber (recorded on 9 June 1873). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Leases, Page 29, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 28 August 1989; copy of recorded deed provided by Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- 4 June 1873--Unknown transaction from Ada Fairfax to G.W. Call for an unknown amount (action either taken or recorded on 4 June 1873); this could be the sale of the 700-800 acres of land sold by Call to **Clara S. Fisk** in about 1876. [REFERENCE: Liber 42 of Deeds, Page 245, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: letter from Ruth Burke, 7 August 1989.]
- 21 June 1873--General Power of Attorney given to **Mary J. Jewell** (widow of Jesse Jewell) by the heirs of Jesse Jewell--**Decatur E. Jewell, Daniel S. Frasier, Abbie Jewell Frasier** (wife of Daniel), **John W. Perry, Mattie Jewell Perry** (wife of John), and **Ruby A. Jewell** (recorded on 25 August 1873). [REFERENCE: Liber "A" of Powers of Attorney, Page 575, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 16 through 18.]
- 18 August 1873--Deed from Mary Jewell, attorney in fact, to Decatur H. Jewell for the remaining land (amount unspecified, but probably 3,000 acres excluding the 1,000 acres sold to Mayer) in the Muñiz Rancho that was purchased from Ada Fairfax by Jesse Jewell (deceased) for \$8,000 (recorded on 25 August

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1873). [REFERENCE: Liber 45 of Deeds, Page 299, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 18 and 19.]

- 18 August 1873--Mortgage from Decatur H. Jewell to Mary Jewell (for herself and as attorney in fact for D.S. Frasier, A.J. Frasier, J.W. Perry, M.J. Perry, R.A. Jewell, and D.H. Jewell) of \$4,000, consisting of four promissory notes of \$1,000 each (due one, two, three, and four years after the mortgage date, respectively) at an interest rate of 10% per annum (recorded on 25 August 1873). [REFERENCE: Liber "3" of Mortgages, Pages 143 through 147, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 20 and 21.]
- 20 September 1873--Quit Claim from Benitz to Call (on 2,500 acres of the property sold by Benitz to Dixon on 1 March 1867) for \$1 (recorded on 20 September 1873); this action also corrected a defect in the record of the property. [REFERENCE: Liber 44 of Deeds, Pages 256 through 258, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Copy of note card from files of Susan Clark, 15 August 1989; copy of recorded deed provided by Ruth Burke, 23 September 1989.]
- 1874-1876--G.W. Call hired thirty to forty Chinese laborers and an Irish foreman (named Reese) to build a new road along the cliffs down the coast from Fort Ross (a distance of about 6 miles, to where the Meyers Grade Road intersects the Coast Highway today) and to improve and widen the then existing road through the Fort and up the coast to Kolmer Gulch (a distance of about 1 mile) for \$7,000, with the last \$600 going for the road widening near and through Kolmer Gulch; this crew then built the current road that goes from Fort Ross up the hill to the ridge road (an approximate 3 mile project). The road down the coast stayed open until sometime in the early- to mid-1880s when it was closed due to slides, and was opened permanently by the Sonoma County in October 1925. [SOURCE: Conversations with Carlos Asa Call on 21 November 1971 and Mercedes Pearce Stafford in about 1985.]
- 1 April 1874--Transfer from William R. Miller and his wife, Emma A. Miller, to the Gualala School District a lot 100 feet square located on the east side of "Timber Cove Gulch" for school purposes (to revert back when not used for that purpose), for consideration of \$1 (recorded on 6 April 1874). [REFERENCE: Liber 45 of Deeds, Page 350, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 95.]

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- 10 July 1874--Survey for a County road down the coast from Kolmer Gulch made by John F. Wade. [SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 111.]
- 29 July 1874--Bond from O.H. Jewell and Mary Jewell to **Albert Canfield** to convey 800 acres of land (that included Black Mountain) on or before 1 September 1874 in consideration of \$2,500 (\$50 paid down); it does not appear that this transaction was ever consummated (recorded on 29 July 1874). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Bonds, Page 846, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of Abstract, 7 July 1871 to 20 March 1876", pages 21 through 23.]
- 1 September 1874--Agreement between G.W. Call, John Colmer (Kolmer), W.R. Miller, Franziska Ruoff (or Franziska Knapp), **James Thompson Stockhoff** (probably John Henry Stockhoff), **Frederick Liebig** (there is a probable misspelling--"Liebig"), **F. Funcke**, and **Lewis Garstle** and The Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County for the purchase of land that comprised a 50-foot wide roadbed (surveyed by **John F. Wade**, Deputy County Surveyor, on 10 July 1874) from Fort Ross to Helmke's land up the coast for \$1 to each person (recorded on 10 October 1874); on Call's property the roadbed was to start at a bridge 6.00 chains northwest of Call's house, go along the existing road 93.50 chains to the south side of Kolmer Gulch, and then wind through Kolmer Gulch over a new roadbed. [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of Bonds and Agreements, Page 34, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 97, 99, and 101.]
- 20 September 1874--Unknown transaction from Benitz to G.W. Call (it should be noted that Benitz left for Argentina on 28 July 1874). [REFERENCE: Liber 44 of Deeds, Page 252, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Letter from Ruth Burke, 7 August 1989.]
- 1 April 1875--Lease from Willis (Miller) to **S.F. Lewis** (of Petaluma) of: (1) the Timber Cove Hotel, barn, and out-buildings, including furniture, crockery, etc., for one year at \$400 per year with privileges for three years; and (2) the field next to "Colmer and Kinney" at \$500 per year (recorded 12 February 1876). [REFERENCE: Liber "B" of Leases, Page 268, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 103.]
- 20 April 1875--U.S. Patent granted to the heirs of Christian F. Ruoff (deceased 15 December 1854) for 148.11 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho; the heirs were represented by Franzisca Ruoff (widow) and included (names as they were in 1899/1900) **Franciska (Frances) H. Baxman**, **Maria (Mary) Helena Thomas**, **John Ruoff**, and **Elizabetha (Lizzie) Catharina Park**. [Reference: Certificate Number

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4864. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 149, 159, 181, 183, and 185.]

- 23 March 1876--Deed from D.H. Jewell to Daniel S. Frasier for (probably) 2,000 acres of land (all the land in the Muñiz Rancho sold by Ada Fairfax to Jesse Jewell, except the 1,000 acres sold by Jesse Jewell to Mayer) and for all his interest in the estate of his father's and his mother's estates (i.e., Jesse and Mary Jewell) for \$800 (recorded on 24 March 1876). [REFERENCE: Liber 53 of Deeds, Page 283, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of the Preceding Abstract, subsequent to 20 March 1876", page 1.]
- 25 May 1876--Release (by John Fritsch, administrator of the estate of Mary Jewell) of Mortgage of 18 August 1873 from D.H. Jewell to Mary Jewell, et al, of \$4,000; on 27 May 1876, the other heirs of Jesse Jewell (D.S. Frasier, A.J. Frasier, J.W. Perry, M.J. Perry, and R.A. Jewell) also signed a release of this mortgage (recorded on 30 May 1876). [REFERENCE: Liber "F" of Releases, Pages 182 and 183, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of the Preceding Abstract, subsequent to 20 March 1876", pages 2 and 4.]
- 26 May 1876--Deed from Daniel S. Frasier to George Washington Call for about 2,000 acres of land for \$4,900; the deed indicates that this land include Black Mountain, and records in 1908 indicate that the land owned by Call, including the "Mayer Ranch", was 2,952.35 acres (recorded on 30 May 1876). [REFERENCE: Liber 55 of Deeds, Page 581, Sonoma County Records; Probate Number 4260, in the Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Sonoma. SOURCES: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of the Preceding Abstract, subsequent to 20 March 1876", pages 6 through 8; Decree Settling Final Account of Executors Making Final Distribution of the Estate of G.W. Call, 12 October 1908, pages 22 and 23.)
- 26 May 1876--Deed from R.A. Jewell to G.W. Call quit claiming and correcting errors in the Deed of 18 August 1873 for the 2,000 acres of land for \$1 (recorded on 30 May 1876). [REFERENCE: Liber 55 of Deeds, Page 585, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of George Washington Call, in the Section "Continuation of the Preceding Abstract, subsequent to 20 March 1876", pages 10 and 11.]
- 29 May 1876--Partial Reconveyance from E.W. Burr, and B.D. Dean, Trustees, to G.W. Call releasing the 2,000 acres of land from the Deed of Trust of 12 July 1871 (recording date not available). [REFERENCE: Not available. SOURCE: Deed Book of

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George Washington Call), in the Section "Continuation of the Preceding Abstract, subsequent to 20 March 1876", page 12 (and probably on page 13, which was not copied from the original).]

- 8 September 1876--Deed from William R. Miller and Emma A. Miller to **Julian (Giuliano) Tomasini** for 502 acres of land on the northwest corner of the Muñiz Rancho for \$7,000 (recorded on 23 September 1876--before **Edwin Blackford** [nephew of G.W. Call], Justice of the Peace at Fort Ross). [REFERENCE: Liber 56 of Deeds, Page 639, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 105 and 107.]
- 8 September 1876--Mortgage from Julian Tomasini to William R. Miller for 502 acres of land (bounded on north by lands of **Helstrom Johnson**, east and south by lands of G.W. Call and John Colmer, west by the Pacific Ocean and lands of Franziska Ruoff) for \$3,705 (recorded on 23 September 1876). [REFERENCE: Liber 12 of Mortgages, Page 131, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 109.]
- 20 September 1876--Deed from John Colmer (Kolmer), Giuliano Tomasini, and Franzisca Ruoff to Sonoma County for a fifty-foot right of way for a public road between Kolmer Gulch and the land up the coast owned by John Henry Stockhoff, which is at the current boundary of the Timber Cove development, for \$1 each (recorded on 10 October 1876). [REFERENCE: Liber 57 of Deeds, Page 246, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 111 and 113.]
- About 1876--Deed from G.W. Call to Clara S. Fisk (a widow--probably of **A.J. Fisk**, who died in 1874) for about 700 acres of land just downcoast from Schroyer's land for \$5,000. [SOURCE: Conversation with Barbara Black regarding her deed book.]
- 1877--Information from old Sonoma County map shows the following owners/acreages on the Muñiz Rancho (from upcoast to downcoast): Wm. R. Miller at north end of Rancho, no acreage shown; J. Coleman (Kolmer) at Timber Cove, no acreage given; G.W. Call at Fort Ross, 2,500 acres; A. Schroyer, downcoast from Call, 1,300 acres; Dixon & Fairfax, uphill from G.W. Call, no acreage given; **Ralph Smith**, adjacent and east of Dixon and Fairfax property (this property appears to include land inside and outside of the Muñiz Rancho boundary--probably 323 acres, what was called the "**Smith Ranch**" that was later acquired by G.W. Call [see "After 1877" transaction]); Clara S. Fisk, downcoast from Schroyer (where the Charles/Black Ranch is now located), 700 acres; G.W. Call in the Black Mountain area, 1,300 acres; A. Mayer, downcoast from Fisk, 1,000 acres; Estate of J. Rule, downcoast from Russian Gulch to the Russian River,

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4,000 acres; Rien & Markham, adjacent to Rule along Russian River, 1,007 acres; Estate of ~~Klan~~ (?) Sheridan, adjacent to Rien & Markham along Russian River, no acreage given (but it was 591 acres on 1908 map); Catherine Hanmy, adjacent to Sheridan along Russian River, 752 (?) acres; "John", adjacent to Hanmy along Russian River, 672 acres.

- 23 May 1877--Fort Ross Post Office established, G.W. Call appointed Postmaster. (SOURCE: "History of Sonoma County", 1879, page 378.)
- 1 August 1877--Holdup by Black Bart (California's most successful stagecoach robber) of the Point Arena-to-Duncans Mills stage at a point about two and one-half miles down the coast road from Fort Ross (on the upcoast side of Timber Gulch); this robbery was Bart's fourth of 28, the first one at which he left a poem (he left only one other poem, at his fifth robbery), and where he gave the world his name. Bart got \$300 in coin and a check for \$305.52 in the robbery. (SOURCE: "Bad Company", Joseph Henry Jackson, 1939, pages 120 through 122 and 334 and 335.)
- 3 December 1877--Release of Mortgage of 8 September 1876 from Julian (Giuliano) Tomasini to William R. Miller (recorded on 14 December 1877). (REFERENCE: Liber "G" of Releases, Page 21, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 109.)
- After 1877--Deed from Dixon (or his heirs and/or Ada Fairfax) to George Washington Call for about 1,337.55 acres of land for an unknown amount (this may be the same transaction as the unknown one from Ada Fairfax to G.W. Call of 4 June 1874); this land, plus the "original" 2,500 acres, made up the main "Call Ranch" at Fort Ross (Call had 3,840 acres at his death in 1907: 2,500 + 1,337.55 = 2.45). (REFERENCE: Probate Number 4260, in the Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Sonoma. SOURCES: Will of G.W. Call, Page Two; Decree Settling Final Account of Executors Making Final Distribution of the Estate of G.W. Call, 12 October 1908, pages 17 and 18; Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.)
- After 1877--Deed from (probably) Ralph Smith to G.W. Call for 323.17 acres of land for an unknown amount; this land, known as the "Smith Ranch", was in the ownership of G.W. and Mercedes Call at the time of G.W.'s death in 1908 (however, in 1957, records indicated that the Smith Ranch consisted of 460 acres). (REFERENCE: Probate Number 4260, in the Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Sonoma. SOURCES: Decree Settling Final Account of Executors Making Final

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Distribution of the Estate of G.W. Call, 12 October 1908, pages 23 and 24; Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.)

- 5 January 1878--Deed from Julian (Giuliano) Tomasini to J.C. Jensen for 122 acres of land in the northwest corner of the Muñiz Rancho for \$732 (recorded on 8 January 1878). [REFERENCE: Liber 62 of Deeds, Page 451, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 119 and 121.]
- 5 January 1878--Mortgage from J.C. Jensen to Frederick Liebig covering 122 acres of land for an unknown amount (recorded on 8 January 1878). [REFERENCE: Liber 17 of Mortgages, Page 400, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 123.]
- 4 May 1878--Deed from J.C. Jensen to Frederick Liebig for 122 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$500 (recorded on 11 June 1878). [REFERENCE: Liber 74 of Deeds, Page 271, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 123 and 125.]
- 1 May 1880--Lease by J. (G.) Tomasini to John Anderson of the Timber Cove Hotel, buildings connected with it, and the garden for a term of one year (with the privilege of two more years) for \$15 per month for six months, the remaining six months rent free (recorded on 2 September 1880). [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of Leases, Page 179, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 127.]
- 1 May 1880--Agreement to give the right of way for a road north from Stillwater Cove through land of John Ruoff and others further up the coast (John S. Brooks, Pierre Adams, Andrew Anderson, E. Blom Qvist, and John McAllester); not acknowledged (recorded on 1 May 1880). [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of Bonds and Agreements, Page 448, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 145 and 147.]
- 22 July 1860--Holdup of the Point Arena-to-Duncans Mills stage by Black Bart at a point about two and one-half miles toward Duncans Mills from Henry's Station (Seaview), a spot not two miles away "as the crow flies" from Bart's 3 August 1877 holdup; this was his twelfth of 28 robberies. [SOURCE: "Bad Company", Joseph Henry Jackson, 1939, pages 334 through 335.]
- 18 March 1881--Deed from G. (J.) Tomasini and his wife, Mary Tomasini, to John Ruoff and Martin Blanchard for 180 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$6,000 (recorded on 11 April 1881). [REFERENCE: Liber 74 of Deeds,

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Page 430, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 129 and 131.]

- 16 March 1881--Mortgage from John Ruoff and Martin Blanchard to G. (J.) Tomasini for the 380 acres of land deeded in the transaction of 18 March 1881 for \$3,000 (recorded on 15 April 1881). [REFERENCE: Liber 27 of Mortgages, Page 401, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 133.]
- Summer/Fall of 1881--Stagecoach holdup by **Dick Fellows** (perhaps California's least successful stagecoach robber) at almost the exact spot at which Black Bart had held up the downcoast stage on 3 August 1877; there was no money or anything else of value in the box, only a letter--and the letter was written in Chinese! [SOURCE: "Bad Company", Joseph Henry Jackson, 1939, page 236.]
- 17 December 1881--Deed from Martin Blanchard to John Ruoff for 380 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$1,000 (recorded on 27 December 1881). [REFERENCE: Liber 77 of Deeds, Page 471, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 135.]
- 17 December 1881--Lease from Franziska Ruoff to John Ruoff all interest in her ranch of 250 acres of land at Timber Cove, including exclusive right to the chute and the use of four cows, ten calves, 176 sheep and three lambs, one mule, two horses, fifteen hogs, one spring wagon and one thimble skien wagon with four inch axles, two drays (belonging to the chute), one mower, two plows, one harrow, one cultivator, one boat, one set of harness, and two dray harnesses; lease was for the term of five years for \$600, payable in half yearly payments of \$300 each (recorded on 27 December 1881). [REFERENCE: Liber "C" of Leases, Page 221, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 153 and 155.]
- 18 March 1882--Mortgage from John Ruoff to John Henry Stockhoff for the 380 acres of land deeded in the transaction of 17 December 1881 for \$3,000 (recorded on 18 March 1882). [REFERENCE: Liber 30 of Mortgages, Page 619, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 137.]
- 27 March 1882--Certificate of Release from G. (J.) Tomasini to John Ruoff and Martin Blanchard for the mortgage of 18 March 1881 (recorded on 31 March 1882). [REFERENCE: Liber "H" of Releases, Page 627, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 133.]
- 2 April 1884--Release of Mortgage of 18 March 1882 from John Ruoff to John Henry Stockhoff (recorded on 21 April 1884).

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[REFERENCE: Liber "J" of Releases, Page 264, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 137.]

- 2 May 1893--Mortgage from John Ruoff to John H. Stockhoff for the 380 acres of land deeded in the transaction of 17 December 1881 for \$2,000, payable in one year, with interest at the rate of 8% (recorded on 4 May 1893). [REFERENCE: Liber 92 of Mortgages, Page 196, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 139.]
- 6 January 1898--Deed from (probably) G.W. Call to the County of Sonoma for a road easement for the road going up to the ridge from the Fort for an unknown amount (recorded on 22 March 1898). [REFERENCE: Liber 178 of Deeds, Page 289, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 23 April 1898--Mortgage from John Ruoff to John H. Stockhoff for the 380 acres of land deeded in the transaction of 17 December 1881 for \$2,000 (recorded on 25 April 1898). [REFERENCE: Liber 114 of Mortgages, Page 530, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 141.]
- 25 April 1898--Cancellation of mortgage of 2 May 1893 from John Ruoff to John H. Stockhoff. [REFERENCE: Liber 92 of Mortgages, Page 196--"cancelled on face of record". SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 139.]
- 18 February 1899--Deed from (probably) G.W. Call to the County of Sonoma for unknown land and for an unknown amount (recorded on 27 March 1899); this was either part of the same action of 6 January 1898 or closely related to it. [REFERENCE: Liber 184 of Deeds, Page 325, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 27 February 1900--Deed from Franziska Ruoff to John Ruoff for 103 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$10 (recorded on 19 May 1900). [REFERENCE: Liber 189 of Deeds, Page 484, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 187.]
- 27 February 1900--Deed from Franziska Ruoff to John Ruoff for 148 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$10--see transaction entries for 28 August 1866 and 19 March 1870 (recorded on 19 May 1900). [REFERENCE: Liber 189 of Deeds, Page 482, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 115 and 117.]

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- 27 February 1900--Deed from Lizzie Park, Frances Baxman, and Mary Thomas to John Ruoff for 148.11 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$675 (recorded on 15 October 1900). [REFERENCE: Liber 191 of Deeds, Page 200, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 189 and 191.]
- 14 May 1900--Order and Decree of Settlement of Accounts and Final Distribution of the estate of Christian F. Ruoff that distributed the 148 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho as follows: one-half to his wife, Franziska (which she had already deeded to her son John on 27 February 1900) and the other one-half in equal shares (i.e., one-eighth each) to his four children, John Ruoff, Franciska Baxman, Maria Thomas, and Elisabeth Park (recorded on 9 July 1900). [REFERENCE: Liber 5 of Decrees of Distribution, Page 590, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 181, 183, and 185.]
- 4 April 1904--Deed from John Ruoff, Mary Thomas, and **Richard McMaha** to the County of Sonoma for a forty-foot right of way for a road following the existing roadbed between Timber Cove Landing and the Ridge Road for \$1 (recorded on 12 December 1904). [REFERENCE: Liber 215 of Deeds, Page 541, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 193 and 195.]
- 23 April 1903--Mortgage from John Ruoff to John H. Stockhoff for the 380 acres of land deeded in the transaction of 17 December 1881 for \$1,000 (recorded on 5 May 1903). [REFERENCE: Liber 135 of Mortgages, Page 384, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 143.]
- 2 May 1903--Cancellation of mortgage of 23 April 1898 from John Ruoff to John H. Stockhoff. [REFERENCE: Liber 114 of Mortgages, Page 530, Sonoma County Records--"cancelled on face of record". SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 141.]
- 25 July 1903--Sale of 2.45 acres of land (the Russian fort) by Call to **J.J. Lerman**, Vice-President of the **California Landmarks League** for \$3,000 (recorded on 27 July 1903); the California Landmarks League apparently purchased 0.56 acres at the Sonoma Mission at about the same time, and State records show both the Fort Ross and the Sonoma Mission purchases lumped together--3.01 acres. [REFERENCE: Liber 206 of Deeds, Page 612, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Will of George Washington Call, Page 3; "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, page 13.]

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- About 1903--Transfer/sale from Mayer, or from Mayer's estate, to Victor Sartori of (probably) 1,000 acres of land for an unknown amount/consideration; Mayer reportedly died in 1903. [REFERENCE: Not available. SOURCE: Speculation based on information regarding related property transactions.]
- 4 February 1904--Deed from Victor Sartori to G.W. Call for (probably) 1,000 acres of land for an unknown amount (recorded on 4 February 1904); this property was known as the "August Mayer Ranch" or "Mayer's Tract", and is that property between Russian Gulch (on the downcoast side) and the Charles (Black) Ranch (on the upcoast side). [REFERENCE: Liber 208 of Deeds, Page 616, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957, under the description of "Parcel Three".]
- 26 April 1905--Cancellation of mortgage of 23 April 1903 from John Ruoff to John H. Stockhoff. [REFERENCE: Liber 135 of Mortgages, Page 384, Sonoma County Records--"cancelled on face of record". SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 143.]
- 23 March 1906--The 2.45 acre parcel, the Russian fort, purchased from Call by the California Landmarks League was deeded to the **State of California** and its agency, the **Sutter's Fort Board of Commissioners** with **William Randolph Hearst** acting as the League's Trustee in the transaction; the **State of California Department Parks and Recreation** records indicate that the official transfer took place on 8 January 1909. [REFERENCES: Book 252, Page 311, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; and/or Book 250, Page 369, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCES: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; "The Russians in California", Quarterly of the California Historical Society, Volume XII, Number 3, September 1933, page 13; Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- September 1908--Information from 1908 "official" Sonoma County Map shows the following owners/acreages on the Muñiz Rancho (from upcoast to downcoast): Mrs. Ruoff, in the extreme northwest corner, 103.11 acres; John Ruoff, just downcoast from Mrs. Ruoff, 300 acres; W.O., A.A., and J.E. Benitz, just downcoast from John Ruoff and about at Timber Cove, 215 acres; **Michael Sichel**, easterly of the three previous coastal properties, 239 acres; G.W. Call, downcoast from the Benitz and Sichel properties around Fort Ross, 6240 acres; **Mary E. and Anna A.** (probably Elizabeth) **Schroyer**, just downcoast from Call, 2,007.78 acres; **Mary Addie Call Charles**, just downcoast from the Schroyer property, 700 acres; G.W. Call,

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just downcoast from the Charles property around Russian Gulch (including the Mayer Ranch), two parcels of 1,000 acres each; **Charles E.S. Rule**, just downcoast from the Call Russian Gulch property, 4,000 acres; **Andrew Markham**, just downcoast from the Rule property and adjacent to the Russian River (including Jenner), 1,007 acres; **Ellen Sharidan**, just up river from the Markham property; and others just up river from the Sharidan property. In addition, the following property is shown on the map just outside the Muñiz Rancho boundary: **Carlos de la Call**, just outside the northwest boundary and on the easterly side, 460 acres; **George Barry Call**, just outside the northwest boundary and on the far easterly corner, 390 acres; and **G.W. Call**, just outside the northeasterly boundary and slightly south of the boundary's mid point, 323.11 acres (the Smith Ranch). Note the discrepancy between the acreage shown for G.W. Call on this map (8,563.11) and that in his will indicated below (7,115.52).

- 12 October 1908--Decree Settling Final Account of Executors Making Final Distribution of the Estate of G.W. Call (who died on 11 March 1907) effected conditions, limitations, and restrictions on the main Call Ranch property (3,840 acres) that included Fort Ross (recorded on 14 October 1908); the most important of the restrictions was that none of the heirs (G.W. Call's children) was allowed to sell or transfer any of their interest in the ranch during their lifetimes to anyone other than another heir--the last of the heirs died in November 1976. This decree also described the property owned by G.W. and Mercedes Call at G.W.'s death--the 3,840 acre main ranch, the 323.17 acre "Smith Ranch", and the 2,952.35 acre "Mayer Ranch", or a total of 7,115.52 acres (filed on 12 October 1908). [REFERENCES: Book 39, Page 33, Sonoma County Records (the Decree); Book 250, Page 369, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Probate Number 4260, in the Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Sonoma. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 1909--Sale by Clara S. Fisk to **Oscar Nelson Charles** and **Mary Addie Call Charles** of about 700 acres of land for \$10,500; this land was just downcoast from the Eckert Ranch. [SOURCE: Conversation with Barbara Black regarding her deed book.]
- March 1913--Deed (including quitclaim) from **Franciska Baxman** and **Elizabetha Park**, and **John Albert Thomas** and **Robert Franklin Thomas**, sons of **Maria Thomas** (deceased), to **Oscar N. and Mary A.C. Charles** for 148 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$10 (recorded on 11 April 1913). [REFERENCE: Liber 7 of Deeds, Page 7, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 281 and 283.]

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- 28 March 1913--Deed (including quitclaim) from **William Frederick Thomas** (of Cochise County, Arizona), son of Maria Thomas (deceased), to Oscar N. and Mary A.C. Charles for 148 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for \$10 (recorded on 11 April 1913). [REFERENCE: Liber 7 of Deeds, Page 7, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, page 285.]
- 7 April 1913--Sale by the executors, William Olsen and Amelia Olsen (the half-sister of John Ruoff), of the estate of John Ruoff (deceased on 10 February 1912) to Oscar N. and Mary A.C. Charles of three parcels of land (reserving the cemetery established in the will and a ten-foot roadway to the cemetery) totaling 631.11 acres (148.11 + 103 + 380) in the northwest corner of the Muñiz Rancho for \$8,000 (recorded on 8 April 1913). [REFERENCE: Liber 7 of Probate Orders, Page 7, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 259 through 265.]
- 8 April 1913--Deed from the executors, William Olsen and Amelia Olsen, of the estate of John Ruoff (deceased on 10 February 1912) to Oscar N. and Mary A.C. Charles of three parcels of land (reserving the cemetery established in the will and a ten-foot roadway to the cemetery) totaling 631.11 acres in the northwest corner of the Muñiz Rancho for \$8,000 (recorded on 9 April 1913). [REFERENCE: Liber 7 of Deeds, Page 7, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 273 through 277.]
- 8 April 1913--Decree issued by the **Superior Court of Sonoma County** in the case of Oscar N. Charles and Mary A.C. Charles versus Martin Blanchard, Amelia B. Olsen, William Frederick Thomas, Franciska Baxman, Elizabeth Park, John Albert Thomas, Robert Franklin Thomas, and "John Doe" and "Bill Snap" to provide information to assure a clear title to 103 acres of land in the northwest portion of the Muñiz Rancho for no consideration (recorded on 28 April 1913). [REFERENCES: Liber 7 of Deeds, Page 7, Sonoma County Records; entered in Judgement Book S, Page 152, Superior Court of Sonoma County. SOURCE: Deed Book of Barbara Black, pages 287, 289, and 291.]
- 1916--Sale by Aaron Schroyer to **Albert Peter Eckert** and **Mercedes Call Eckert** of (possibly) 2,618 acres of land (which became known as the Eckert Ranch) for an unknown amount (see transaction entries for 1873, 1 February 1924, 26 September 1978, and February 1981). [SOURCE: "Santa Rosa Press Democrat" article of February 1981 regarding the estate of Mercedes Call Eckert.]
- 24 September 1917--Deed from (probably) the Call Family to the County of Sonoma for unknown land and for an unknown amount

(recorded on 27 December 1918); this was either part of the same action of 6 January 1898 or closely related to it. [REFERENCE: Book 365, Page 346, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]

- 16 March 1923--Easement (contained in Deed) from the Call Family to Sonoma County; this easement was undoubtedly for right of way over either the main Call Ranch or the Call Family's Mayer Ranch (see transaction entry for 4 February 1904) for the building of Highway 1, and, if so, it was donated along with \$2,000. [REFERENCES: Book 63, Page 145, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number 32826, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957; comments from November 1983 letter of Mercedes Pearce Stafford.]
- 28 December 1923--Grant of Right of Way from Oscar Nelson Charles (husband of Mary Addie Call Charles) to Sonoma County for (reportedly) \$500 (recorded on 15 January 1924); this easement was undoubtedly for right of way over the Charles Ranch (but probably also included some Call Ranch property) for the building of Highway 1, and if so, it was sold for an unknown amount, reportedly the proceeds going to Oscar Charles went toward the purchase of a piano. [REFERENCES: Book 59, Page 426, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number 32758, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957; comments from November 1983 letter of Mercedes Pearce Stafford.]
- 15 January 1924--Easement for general road purposes from the Call Family to either Sonoma County or the State of California for an unknown consideration, probably a donation. [REFERENCES: Book 59, Page 426, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number 32758. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- January 1924--Easement for highway and incidental purposes from the Call Family to either Sonoma County or the State of California for an unknown consideration, probably a donation (recorded on 17 January 1924). [REFERENCES: Book 59, Page 441, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number 32825. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]

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- 1 February 1924--Grant of Right of Way from Al and Mercedes (Call) Eckert to Sonoma County; this easement was undoubtedly for right of way over the Eckert Ranch for the building of Highway 1, and, if so, it was donated (see transaction entries for 1873, 1916, 28 September 1978, and February 1981) (recorded on 21 February 1924). [REFERENCE: Book 73, Page 64, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957; comments from November 1983 letter of Mercedes Pearce Stafford.]
- Between 1924 and 1933--Easement for County road from the Call Family (Mercedes Call, et al) to Sonoma County. [REFERENCE: Book 178, Page 289, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 18 August 1938--Easement for a perpetual right of way from the Call Family to the State of California for a 200-foot strip of land next to Highway 1 in Fort Ross Creek (recorded 14 September 1938); [REFERENCES: Book 460, Page 280, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number A-98319, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 15 October 1939--Easement for right of way from the Call Family to the State of California for a channel in Russian Gulch (recorded on 26 February 1941). [REFERENCES: Book 518, Page 487, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number B-28949, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 15 October 1940--Deed from the Call Family to the State of California for an unknown amount of land (probably related to the transaction entry of 15 October 1939) for an unknown amount (recorded on 26 February 1941). [REFERENCE: Book 518, Page 485, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 8 October 1945--Effect of Order of Abandonment as a result of a petition for the abandonment of a portion of the former State Highway in the vicinity of Russian Gulch (recorded on 15 October 1945). [REFERENCES: Book 667, Page 146, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number C-1972, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and

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Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]

- 26 May 1949--Complaint (Eminent Domain), State of California versus the Call Family for 0.4 acres of land adjacent to the State property (for a Ranger residence) at Fort Ross for \$770 (Summons on 1 June 1949); note that the Call Family could not sell any property and the State of California had to condemn in order to get around the provisions of G.W. Call's will. [REFERENCES: Compliant Number 37878, Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Sonoma; Book 977, Page 384, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number D-18442, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; California Department of Parks and Recreation letter from their Senior Land Agent, dated 6 April 1989; Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 20 July 1950--Final Order of Condemnation transferring 0.4 acres of land adjacent to the State property at Fort Ross from the Call Family to the State of California (recorded on 21 July 1950). [REFERENCES: Compliant Number 37878, Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Sonoma; Book 977, Page 384, Sonoma County Book of Official Records Recorder's Serial Number D-18442, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; California Department of Parks and Recreation letter from their Senior Land Agent, dated 6 April 1989; Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957; copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 28 April 1950--Grant of right of way from the Call Family to **Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company** for an unknown amount (recorded on 23 June 1950). [REFERENCE: Book 971, Page 139, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number D-16310, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]
- 29 August 1950--Deed from (probably) the Call Family to the State of California for unknown land and for an unknown amount (recorded on 25 October 1950); it is unknown at this time if this transaction is related to that of 26 May 1949. [REFERENCE: Book 1001, Page 549, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]

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- 11 February 1952--Grant of right of way from the Call Family to **Pacific Gas and Electric Company** for an unknown amount (recorded on 19 March 1952); this was undoubtedly for the initial right of way for the installation of electric power to Fort Ross and the north Sonoma County coast (before this time, people had some sort of electric power generation system). [REFERENCE: Recorder's Serial Number D-62874, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957.]

- 3 December 1952--Right of Way (Eminent Domain) from the Call and Eckert families to Pacific Gas and Electric Company (recorded on 7 January 1953--Complaint was dated 25 July 1925; Summons was dated 5 August 1952; Amendment to Complaint was dated 26 November 1952; and Judgment of Condemnation was dated sometime in 1957); this was for right of way over the land between Highway 1 and the ocean. [REFERENCES: Book 1179, Page 395, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Complaint Number 35928, Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Sonoma; Recorder's Serial Number D-73550, Sonoma County Records. SOURCES: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; copies of court records among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]

- 7 November 1953--Agreement between the Call Family and **Hardin T. Chenoweth, William C. Chenoweth, and Leslie C. Chenoweth** for the right to cut and market timber on designated areas (e.g., excluding Fort Ross Gulch, the Picnic Grounds, and other areas) of the Call Family's Fort Ross Ranch; this agreement was rescinded and replaced with another agreement, dated 15 December 1955, that was scheduled to terminate on 31 December 1967 (the agreement stipulated that no trees under specified sizes were to be cut: redwood trees no smaller than 20 inches 20 feet above the ground, and fir trees no smaller than 20 inches at a point four and one-half feet above the ground, both measurements inside the bark). [SOURCE: Copy of agreement among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]

- 23 January 1956--Final Order of Condemnation for land from (probably) the Call Family to the State of California for unknown land and for an unknown amount; this is probably the final legal action related to the transaction of 29 December 1961. [REFERENCES: Suit Number 39511, filed in the Office of the Clerk of Sonoma County; Recorder's Serial Number E-71728. SOURCE: Western Title Insurance and Guarantee Company (in the matter of the estate of Ana Rosa Call Pearce), dated 11 June 1957; copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]

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- June 1957--Agreement between the Call Family and **Clark Nelson** to harvest tan bark (at \$10 per cord) in designated areas of the Call Family's Fort Ross Ranch; this agreement was scheduled to terminate on 31 December 1957. [SOURCE: Copy of agreement among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 1957--Agreement between the Call Family and **Austin McBain** to cut and purchase fir piling or poles (for 5¢ per lineal foot) on limited areas of the Call Family's Fort Ross Ranch; this agreement was scheduled to terminate three years after the date of signing (the agreement stipulated that trees must be 16 inches or under at a point four and one-half feet above the ground, measuring inside the bark). [SOURCE: Copy of agreement among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- About 1957--Sale by **Barbara Mercedes Charles Black** (daughter of Oscar and Mary Charles) and **George Henry Black** of their Timber Cove property (inherited by Barbara) to developers for about \$150 per acre. [SOURCE: memory.]
- 15 June 1960--Final Order of Judgement of Condemnation for an easement for electric transmission and distribution lines and for incidental purposes (California Department of Parks and Recreation records indicate the date of this document to be 2 August 1957) from the Call Family to Pacific Gas and Electric Company for lines near the Fort and across the fields down the coast from the Fort (recorded on 20 June 1960). [REFERENCES: Book 1764, Page 13, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number G-14832, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 29 December 1961--Sale (by condemnation, augmented by court judgement) of 353.0 acres of land (the California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions states that this figure is 345.0 acres, which is believed to be incorrect) by the Call Family to the State of California for about \$236,000 (including about \$50,000 for the timber, some unknown amount for the buildings, and an unknown set price per acre for the land--verbal info from George Kaye that must be confirmed)--the first offer by the State was about \$114,000 (needs to be confirmed); this land covered an area from the downcoast boundary of the Call property to about where the current Visitor Center parking lot is and from the ocean to the edge of the Russian Orchard, and it included all buildings at the main ranch facility, the store, and timber in Fort Ross Creek (recorded on 8 January 1962). The land was officially transferred to the Department of Parks and Recreation by the Department of Transportation on 16 March 1976. [REFERENCES:

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Book 1865, Page 795, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Book 3057, Page 361, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number G-76992. SOURCES: "Santa Rosa Press Democrat" article of February 1981 regarding the estate of Mercedes Call Eckert (that indicated the acreage was 353); other newspaper articles; verbal comments by Call Family members; copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]

- July 1964--Easement from the Call Family to Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (recorded on 20 July 1964). [REFERENCE: Book 2060, Page 189, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 19 February 1965--Filing of "Record of Survey of Lands of the State of California in the Muñiz Rancho". [REFERENCE: Book 100 of Maps, Page 59, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Copy of Grant Easement between the Call Family and Continental Telephone Company of California described in the transaction of January 1977, provided by Laurie Carr Horn.]
- 1 October 1963--Lease of the "Fort Ross Ranch" and the "Smith Ranch" from members of the Call Family and Edward J. Furlong for \$1,500 each six months for a period of three years; this was renewed by Carlos Asa Call, George Call Pearce, Carlos Pearce, Madelin Mercedes Rose Call Willig, Ramona Elizabeth Call Schuerman, George Russell Kaye, Mercedes Call Eckert, Mercedes Pearce Stafford, Laurie Carr Aho as Executrix of the Estate of Laura Call Carr, Naomi Aileen Cucchi, Viva Leiva Kaye Tomlin, Barbara Mercedes Charles Black, and Jon Charles Williamson on 1 October 1971 for another three year period (and was probably renewed periodically until the main Call Ranch was sold in 1979). [SOURCE: Copy of lease agreement from the papers of Laurie Carr Horn (formerly Laurie Carr Aho).]
- July 1968--Formation of the **Call Fort Ross Properties Association**, including those people named in the transaction of 1 October 1963 (Carlos Call, George Pearce, Carlos Pearce, Madelin Willig, Ramona Schuerman, George Kaye, Mercedes Eckert, Mercedes Stafford, Laurie Aho, Naomi Cucchi, Viva Tomlin, Barbara Black, and Jon Williamson). [SOURCE: Copy of Association agreement from the papers of Laurie Carr Horn (formerly Laurie Carr Aho).]
- 29 June 1971--Permit for power lines (near the group camp site near Fort Ross Creek) from the State of California to Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (not recorded). [REFERENCE:

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California Department of Parks and Recreation File 419.4.
SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]

- 18 August 1971--Filing of Record of Survey for an unknown part of the Call Ranch. [REFERENCE: Book 160 of Maps, Pages 10 and 11, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 26 May 1972--Joint Use Agreement between the **Redwood Empire Telephone Company** and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (not recorded). [REFERENCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation File 419.4. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]
- 25 July 1972--Final Order of Judgment of Condemnation for an unknown amount of land for the Coast Highway right-of-way from the Call Family to the State of California for \$25,850 (recorded on 25 July 1972). [REFERENCES: Book 2648, Page 333, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number M-83149; Superior Court Number S9802. SOURCES: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye; description of highway included in copy of Grant Easement described in transaction of January 1977, provided by Laurie Carr Horn.]
- 26 September 1973--Easement (by judgement in Sonoma County Superior Court) for travel by vehicles and on foot granted from the Call Family to **Robert M. Moore, et al** (recorded on 10 October 1973); this probably regards property in "Turner Canyon" near the eastern property line that was near the branch of the Gualala River. [REFERENCES: Book 2804, Page 343, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number N-61951. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 15 November 1973 and 11 April 1974--Transfer of approximately 3 acres of land from the California Department of Transportation and the transfer of abandoned utility right of ways from Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company to the Department of Parks and Recreation (recorded on 28 November 1973 and 16 March 1974); this transaction was regarding the abandoned Highway 1 that became surplus when the highway was re-routed around the Fort. [REFERENCES: Book 2819, Page 49, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Book 3057, Page 361, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]

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- 14 May 1974--Record of Survey for an unknown part of the Call Ranch. [REFERENCE: Book 219 of Maps, Pages 44 and 45, Sonoma County Records. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 22 September 1975 and 20 November 1975--Transfer of .24 acres of land from the County of Sonoma to the California Department of Parks and Recreation; this land was the abandoned Fort Ross Road (up to the ridge from Fort Ross) that became surplus when Highway 1 was re-routed around the fort. [REFERENCES: Book 3007, Page 93, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Book 3020, Page 790, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]
- 29 July 1976--Grant Deed of 239.12 acres of land and water, ingress, and egress rights in an unknown location by the Call Family to the State of California (California Department of Parks and Recreation records indicate the date of this grant was 14 June 1976) for \$237,134.98 (recorded on 22 September 1976); this land was located up the hill from the 29 December 1961 acquisition, and it included the Russian Orchard, part of the Call Picnic/Russian Logging area, and various water rights. [REFERENCES: Book 3129, Pages 83, 84, 824, 829, and 833, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Numbers R-57070, R-57071, R-57072, R-57073, and R-57074. SOURCES: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; California Department of Parks and Recreation letter from their Senior Land Agent, dated 6 April 1989; copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- 10 November 1976--Easement for an underground telephone line from State of California Department of Parks and Recreation to Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (not recorded); this easement was on the north side of Highway 1 just to the west of the road up the hill from the Park entrance. [REFERENCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation File 429.6. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]
- December 1976--Easement (by condemnation) for communications facilities and incidental purposes from the Call Family to Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (recorded on 21 December 1976). [REFERENCES: Book 3167, Page 821, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number R-78439. SOURCE: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch (in 1979) among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]

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- 10 January 1977--Easement for 10-foot wide underground communications from the California Department of Parks and Recreation to the **Continental Telephone Company of California** (recorded on 9 February 1977); this easement is at least partially located at the intersection of Highway 1 and the upcoast end of the highway abandoned when the road was re-routed around the Fort. [REFERENCE: Book 3187, Page 898, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]
- January 1977--Easement for 10-foot wide underground communications from the Call Fort Ross Properties Association to the Continental Telephone Company of California; this easement was on Call Family property adjacent to that described in the transaction of 10 January 1977. [SOURCE: Copy of Grant Easement from the files of Laurie Carr Horn.]
- 20 January 1978--Sale of 143.5 acres of land by the Call Family to the State of California for \$502,250 (recorded on 20 March 1978); this land was located up the coast from the 29 December 1961 acquisition, and it included the land between Highway 1 and the ocean (but not all the way up the coast to Kolmer Gulch). [REFERENCES: Book 3368, Page 985, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Book 3369, Pages 1, 13, 23, 31, 39, and 47, Sonoma County Book of Official Records; Recorder's Serial Number S-89394. SOURCES: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; California Department of Parks and Recreation letter from their Senior Land Agent, dated 6 April 1989.]
- 26 September 1978--Sale of 1,118.27 acres of land by the Estate of Mercedes Call Eckert to the State of California for \$1,014,000; this land was located down the coast from the 29 December 1961 acquisition between Highway 1 and the ocean, and it included all land of the Eckert Ranch between Highway 1 and the ocean (including the campground) except for that surrounding the ranch building (the "Red Barn" complex) and a very small parcel near the down coast boundary (see also the transaction entries of 1873, 1916, 1 February 1924, and February 1981). [REFERENCE: Book 3458, Page 344, Sonoma County Book of Official Records. SOURCES: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions; California Department of Parks and Recreation letter from their Senior Land Agent, dated 6 April 1989.]
- 4 September 1979--Sale of the remainder of the main Call Ranch (3,097 acres, according to the sale agreement) by the Call Family to **Fiberboard Corporation** for \$3,050,000 (Fiberboard was a wholly owned subsidiary of **Louisiana Pacific Company** which was later [in late 1988/early 1989] spun off due to Louisiana Pacific's concern about Fiberboard's legal problems

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with regard to asbestos). [SOURCES: Copies of records regarding final sale of the Call Ranch among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye; information from other appropriate transaction entries, above.]

- 4 September 1979--Recreational agreement between Fiberboard Corporation and some members of the Call Family covering 9.853 acres, a redwood grove called "The Island" that is in the fields near Kolmer Gulch; rental was \$1 per year for a ten year period, to be paid at the beginning of the agreement period, renewable for ten-year periods. [SOURCE: Copies of records regarding among the personal papers of George Russell Kaye.]
- January/February 1981--Sale by the estate of Mercedes Call Eckert to the **Soper-Wheeler Company** (a lumber company) of about 1,500 acres of land (the remainder of the Eckert Ranch--see transaction entries of 1873, 1916, 1 February 1924, and 28 September 1978) for \$1,300,000. [SOURCE: "Santa Rosa Press Democrat" article of February 1981 regarding the estate of Mercedes Call Eckert.]
- 1 May 1982--Lease Agreement between the California Department of Parks and Recreation and **David Pedotti** and **Maurene Pedotti** covering land between the Fort Ross Reef Campground and Jewell Gulch and between Highway 1 and the ocean (not recorded); the lease terminated on 30 April 1986. [REFERENCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Lease Number 6471. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]
- 1 May 1982--Campground Recreation Lease Agreement between the California Department of Parks and Recreation and David Pedotti and Maurene Pedotti covering land at the Fort Ross Reef Campground (not recorded); the lease was for joint use, overflow parking, and grazing, and it terminated on 31 October 1986. [REFERENCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Lease Number 6472. SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Acquisitions.]
- 10 December 1989--Sale/donation by Fiberboard Corporation to **Save The Redwoods League** (headed by **John Dawitt**) of 1,075/1,082 acres of land (a total of 2,157), the sale portion for \$3,000,000 and the donated portion appraised at \$3,000,000; this land is all the remaining Call Ranch land between the ocean and Sea View Road and north to Kolmer Gulch that was not already part of Fort Ross State Historic Park. This property is scheduled to be sold to the California Department of Parks and Recreation in April 1990 for \$1,500,000, completing an agreement that was included in the Bond Act of June 1988 for acquisition at Fort Ross. [SOURCES: Newspaper articles of the *San Francisco Chronicle* (20 December 1989), the *Press Democrat*

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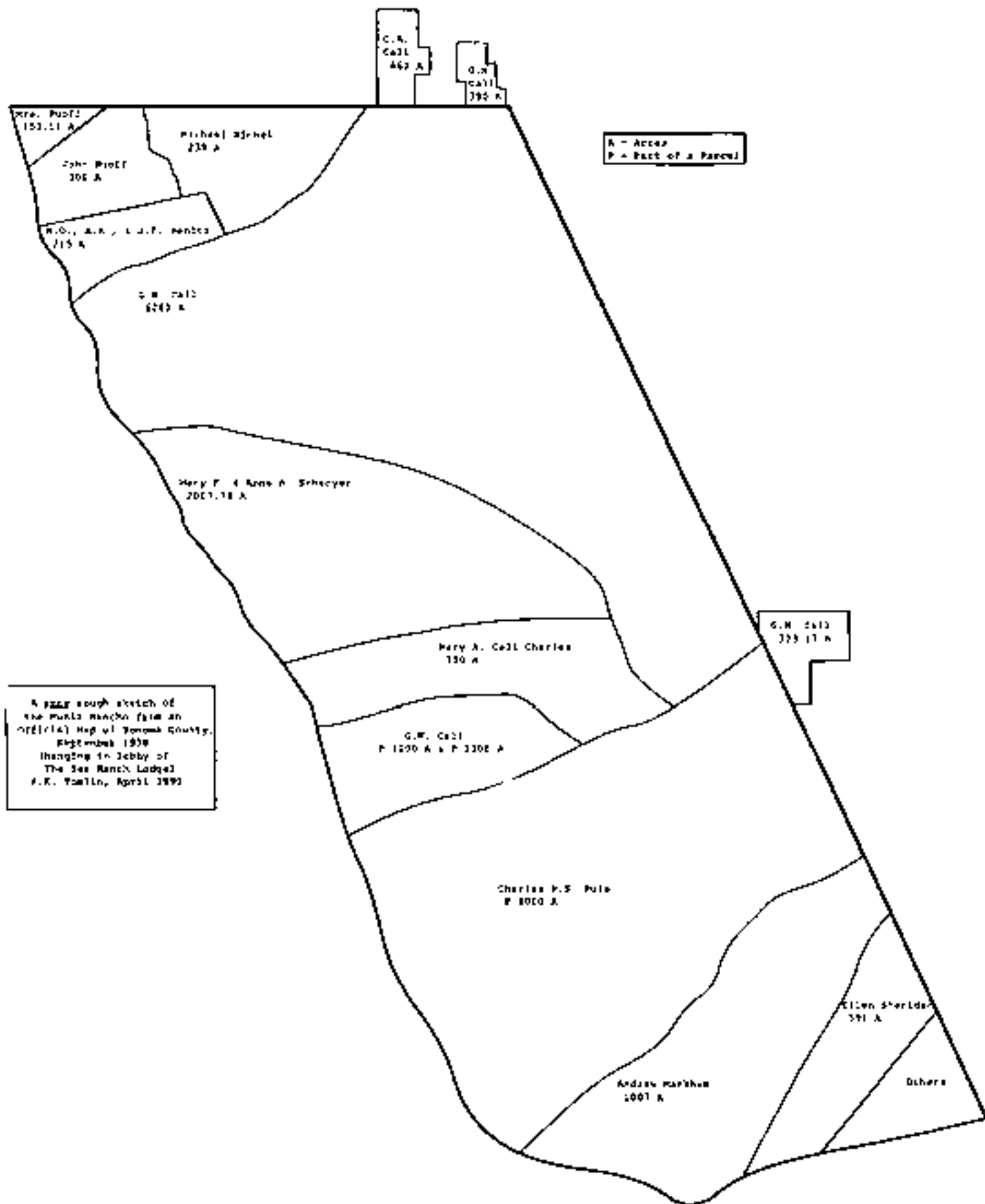
(20 December 1989), *The Bodega Bay Navigator* (21 December 1989), and the *Independent Coast Observer* (22 December 1989).)

- 27 March/April 1990--Sale to the **California State Coastal Conservancy** to acquire 273 acres of land from Barbara Mercedes (Charles) Black, et al (**John William Stafford** [Executor of the Estate of Mercedes Pearce Stafford], **Pamela Susan Pearce Heyman** [for **Cornelia Van Bar am Pearce**], and **Anna Margaret Pearce Hawkins** [Executrix of the Estate of George Call Pearce]) for \$655,000 (agreement for sale was 18 August 1989). The Coastal Conservancy approved an additional \$211,000 on 1 March 1990 to pay for a parking lot, an access road, hiking and wheelchair trails, and two vista points; when this work is completed, the land will be turned over to the Department of Parks and Recreation for \$100,000, and the Coastal Conservancy will sign an agreement to maintain the land. This land, that was a part of the Mayer Ranch, includes all property between Highway 1 and the ocean and extending from the State Park's current Russian Gulch property (sold to the State previously, but not included in this list yet) up the coast to about Meyers Gulch (the boundary of the current Black Ranch). [SOURCES: Project Summary of the California State Coastal Conservancy, dated 18 August 1989; Newspaper articles of the *Independent Coast Observer* (2 March 1990) and *The Paper* (1-7 March 1990).]

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NOTE: The "Deed Book of Barbara Black" referred to as a source in the above list is actually titled "Abstract of Title and List of Incumbrances", The Sonoma County Abstract Bureau, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, C.T. Hahmann, Manager; there is no date on this "old" document. This document also contains two sections entitled "Continuation of the Preceding Abstract of Title", one (page 199) indicating it is subsequent to 31 December 1910 and the other (page 253) indicating it is subsequent to 7 April 1913. There is a sticker attached to the front cover with the following handwritten information: "Land of J. Ruoff on Muñiz Ranch and Secs 10 and 15, T8N.R13n, M.D.M." The "Deed Book of George Washington Call" and its abstracts is a similar document.

F. Kaye Tomlin
26 April 1990



A - Acres
P - Part of a Parcel

A rough sketch of
the Puris Rancho farm in
California Map of Yuma County,
September 1938
hanging in lobby of
The Sea Ranch Lodge
F.R. Yonlin, April 1993

Mrs. Profz
152.11 A

John Profz
206 A

Michael Stoppel
238 A

W.O., A.K.A. L.J.F. Mendez
715 A

G.W. Call
6282 A

Mary F. & Anne H. Schreyer
2067.18 A

Mary A. Call Charles
130 A

G.W. Call
329 17 A

G.W. Call
P 1200 A & P 3200 A

Charles P.S. Pule
P 8000 A

Andrus Markham
1001 A

Ellen Sheridan
591 A

Others

C.A.
Call
462 A

G.W.
Call
392 A

EARLY ROAD BUILDING NEAR FORT ROSS

In a conversation a number of years ago with my uncle, Carlos Call (who was born at Fort Ross in 1880 and lived there until his death in 1972), he was talking about life in the 1870s and 1880s when a County tax collector would come to the Fort to collect a \$4 per person head tax. Some inhabitants, having easily detected his coming, would quickly decide to go to sea to fish for the day or head for the hills on an impromptu hunting trip, thus avoiding payment. But Carlos' father, George Washington Call, was not the kind of person to take such action. As a result, the tax collector was able to collect not only from George but also from George for all of George's employees; George simply deducted the \$4 from each of their pay. Carlos went on to say that his father's employees included a number of Chinese that had been hired to build part of the Coast Road down the coast from the Fort.* This statement piqued my curiosity and got me started asking quite a few more questions.

According to Carlos, about 30 to 40 Chinese laborers and an Irish foreman (named Reese) had been hired by his father to build a new road along the cliffs down the coast from Fort Ross (a distance of about six miles) and to improve and widen the then existing road through the Fort and up the coast to Kolmer (Kohlmer) Gulch (a distance of about 1 mile). The cost was \$7,000, with the last \$800 used for widening the road near Kolmer Gulch. After this job was completed, the crew also built the current (but somewhat modified) road that goes from Fort Ross up to the ridge road (an approximate 3 mile project); this effort cost George \$1,000, which was later refunded, probably by Sonoma County.

Limited research has shown that the Coast Road was completed sometime between mid-1873 (when G. W. Call and his wife, Mercedes Leiva, became the owners of the Fort) and August 3, 1877 (the date of Black Bart's famous stage holdup at Timber Gulch, approximately two and one-half miles down the coast from Fort Ross--he got \$300 in coin and a check in the amount of \$305.52). The road was apparently still open in 1881 when the stage was again held up at almost the same spot as Black Bart's robbery by Dick Felloe, possibly California's least successful bandit (once again, Dick was a loser; when he opened the strong box after it was thrown down to him, he found no gold, no money, no checks--only one letter, and it was written in Chinese). How long the road below Mill Gulch remained open after the Dick Felloe robbery is currently not known, but it was not long--lack of adequate road maintenance was undoubtedly the primary reason.

* The Chinese presence at Fort Ross during this (and other) times is a matter of record. William Otto Benitz and his wife, Josephine Kohlmer (the first Ranch Era owners of Fort Ross), had Chinese cooks, as did the next Ranch Era owners James Dixon/Charles Snowden Fairfax and his wife, Ada Benham; the Calls apparently "inherited" them. Also, shipping records indicate that the Chinese shipped "abalone, abalone shells, and sea moss" from Fort Ross to San Francisco on a number of occasions between December 1877 and at least August 1880.

Were it not for George Call and the Chinese crew, the Coast Highway probably would not now go along those spectacular cliffs that provide scenic joys for most and the jitters for some. Because of previous experiences, building the road along the cliffs was probably not too difficult a task for either to have undertaken. It is known that George, among his other pursuits while in South America, had subcontracted work from "Honest Harry" Meiggs (infamous for his dealings in San Francisco), including the building railroads in Chile and up the very steep Andes Mountains in Peru; also, if his crews in South America were typical for that time (the 1860s), they included Chinese. On the other hand, the Chinese and the Irish foreman at Fort Ross surely had road building experience in gained in difficult situations in California or the Far West.

In October 1926, the Coast Road between Fort Ross and what is now called Meyers Grade Road was reopened by the State of California (this is an important date at Fort Ross, as the Master Plan marks this event as the end of the Ranch Era interpretation period). The work took about two years to complete, during which there was a considerable debate among people in the local area, some who wanted the Coast Road to go up and along the ridge (where Meyers Grade Road now goes). Most Call family members were supporters of the "cliff" route. They donated the 50-foot right-of-way over their Fort Ross Ranch lands, and they contributed \$2,000 toward the expense of its construction. Al and Mercedes (Call) Eckert also donated right-of-way over their ranch, which adjoined the Call Ranch just down the coast. Oscar and Mary (Call) Charles, whose ranch (now the Black Ranch) adjoined the Eckert Ranch down the coast, were among those who opposed the coast route, and they did not donate right-of-way over their property; they believed it would be too costly, and maybe physically impossible, to keep the road open--a very rational point if one remembers the recent washout at Mill Gulch, as well as other significant land slides and subsequent road work. Ultimately, the State obtained right-of-way from the Charles family, and Oscar used the money to buy Mary a piano.

As a final note, it may be interesting to know that the Call family named many features in the area as points of reference; other people living in the area knew of and used many of these names. The names on the Coast Road included: China Slide, Blue Slide, Minerva Point ("by the time I get there, m' nerve 's all gone"), Earthquake Point, High Point, Black Bart Turn (where the holdup occurred), Shotgun Point (for Black Bart), and Culebra Cut. Names along the road from the Fort to the ridge included: The Lane (destroyed by the rerouting of the Coast Highway), The Water Trough, Wildcat Turn, Tame Deer Tree, Double Bars, Ford's Rest, Walk's Apple Tree, Cape Horn, The Handsome Oak, The Parachute, and The Green House. A description of the other names will have to remain a topic for another discussion.

F. Kaye Tomlin
April 1986

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 942898

SA MENTO 94296 0001

(916) 322-7540



April 6, 1989

Ms. Kaye Tomlin
2259 Cobblehill Place
San Mateo, CA 94402

Dear Ms. Tomlin:

I was pleased to learn the Fort Ross SIF Land Ownership Record Drawing was helpful to you. Book and Page refer to the indexing of the document in the County Recorder's Office. "D" refers to the book title, in this case Deeds. "O.R." also refers to the book title, in this case Official Records. Generally, the title "Book of Deeds" was used in earlier times and was superseded by "Book of Official Records." Currently, some county recorders are placing documents on microfilm. When this is done, the recording reference will often be a reel number and document number.

Our records indicate the following amounts were paid for the parcels you asked about:

| Parcel | Amount |
|--------|--------------|
| 3 | \$ 770.00 |
| 4 | 000.00 |
| 9 | 237,134.98 |
| 10 | 502,250.00 |
| 11 | 1,014,000.00 |

If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert S. Simpson".

Robert S. Simpson
Senior Land Agent